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ABSTRACT

This report represents the shared vision of several hundred Idahoans of what Idaho's schools can become--not only what education can become in an ideal sense, but also what schools need to do to provide the young people of Idaho with the skills, abilities, and knowledge they will need to be fulfilled individuals, able workers, and fully functioning citizens. The report contains two sections. The first section, "What Idahoans Say About...," presents a consensus view of the state's citizens on four areas: future student needs, strengths to build on, priority areas for improvement, and a vision for Idaho education. The second section, "Getting From Here to There," contains the goals for reform of the Idaho education system. These goals are to enable all children to be ready for school; to shift to a performance-based system; to redesign curriculum and modernize teaching; and to build a capability for excellence. (DB)

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... an action plan for education in the 21st century

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PREPARING FOR IDAHO'S FUTURE

An Action Plan

for

Education in the 21st Century

SUMMARY

R-117/1

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THE IDAHO EDUCATION PROJECT

January 1991

Idahoans entered the decade of the 1990s with a renewed spirit for enhancing our great quality of life. Providing Idaho's children with a top-rate education continues as a cornerstone to that quality of life blueprint.

The research effort embodied in *PREPARING FOR IDAHO'S FUTURE: AN ACTION PLAN FOR EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY* is a product of Idahoans for the benefit of Idaho's children. Initiated and sponsored by twenty-five Idaho companies, the recommendations reflect the shared vision of several hundred Idahoans. A team of professionals with deep roots in Idaho education compiled the findings with the able leadership of a world-class research firm.

We present this action plan to assure that Idaho students will have what it takes to be successful in the 21st century. The discussions resulting from these recommendations will lead to lasting positive improvements in a highly competitive world. Idaho's business community will remain actively involved to ensure implementation of these innovative recommendations.

The Board of Directors
THE IDAHO EDUCATION PROJECT

Doug Carnahan
Hewlett-Packard Company

Jim Crocker
EG&G

Gene Hill
U.S. West Communications

Jack Kendrick
Bunker Hill Mining U.S. Inc.

Gary Michael
Albertson's Inc.

Joe Parkinson
Micron Technology Inc.

Several Idaho businesses have joined together to fund the development of the Idaho Education Project. Though they have maintained an arm's length relationship to the research and formulation of recommendations, they remain committed to see that the future needs of Idaho's students are met in a quality way.

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Rogers Brothers Seed Company

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Governor Cecil Andrus and legislative and education leaders endorsed the Idaho Education Project at its outset in early 1990. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jerry Evans pledged his cooperation and the support of the State Department of Education throughout the research phase of the project. Project endorsers included:

Michael Crapo, President Pro Tem
Idaho State Senate

Jerry Thorne, Chair
Senate Education Committee

Laird Noh, Vice-Chair
Senate Education Committee

Bruce Sweeney, Democratic Leader
Idaho State Senate

Tom Boyd, Speaker
Idaho House of Representatives

Janet Hay, Chair
House Education Committee

James Stoicheff, Democratic Leader
Idaho House of Representatives

Roberta Fields, Chair
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Dennis Sonius, President
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Idaho School Boards Association

Susan Hesler, President
Idaho Parent Teacher Association

Julie Kilgrow, Director
Idaho Department of Employment

WHY ANOTHER STUDY

The purpose of the Idaho Education Project is to catalyze change. Our business sponsors were concerned with the future of education, knowing that the state's quality of life, as well as the ability of business to compete in the inter-mountain region, the nation, and the world, depend on the strength of Idaho's K-12 education system. The first step, they felt, was to help the state formulate a vision of what Idaho's schools can become — not only what education can become in an ideal sense, but also what schools need to do to provide the young people of Idaho with the skills, abilities and knowledge they will need to be fulfilled individuals, able workers, and fully functioning citizens. Second, the sponsors felt the state needed to develop a concrete plan of action to realize that vision, knowing that this plan might require a restructuring of schools.

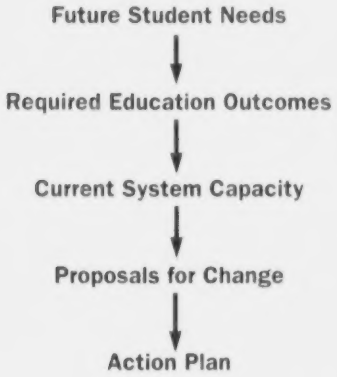
Why should Idaho be a place where serious restructuring of schools takes place? The schools seem good enough. On standardized tests of achievement, Idaho students score at the national average or better. The state spends about 50% of its budget on K-12 schools. Graduates of Idaho schools have excelled in higher education or in their professional careers, and their success speaks well of the education system. There is no doubt that Idaho's K-12 schools have served the state well during its first century.

However, Idaho is at a turning point as a state and in its expectations for education. Citizens of the state can make choices now that will guide the future of the schools, choices which will dictate both the pace and the nature of change. The famed quality of life in Idaho — the prime northwestern location, the fabulous natural environment, the relatively low cost of land and housing, the neighborliness in communities, the work ethic widely found here, and the absence of many of the problems that plague more densely settled regions of the United States — makes Idaho a highly desirable place to live and to work. One positive choice Idahoans can make is to add a strong educational system to the list of the state's amenities. While Idaho's education system has been adequate for its first century, significant changes are needed for the decades ahead. Idaho can build on the base of its successful schools and choose to make the schools of its second century among the best in the nation.

The will to change exists in Idaho. Strengthening the education system is the focus of many political campaigns, an expression of the concern that many citizens feel. For the first time in decades, a President has put educational goals at the forefront of the national agenda. Over the past ten years in Idaho, several major commissions and task forces have suggested various improvements. Business leaders are as concerned about the skills entry-level employees exhibit as university officials are about the abilities of entering students.

The business sponsors of the Idaho Education Project are responding to a number of these indications that the time is right for serious, sustained, and possibly dramatic change of K-12 education.

Project Approach



Business has sponsored The Idaho Education Project, but it is not dictating its work. Instead, the sponsors hired us to plan and execute a process through which citizens of the state would participate in articulating their vision of the future of Idaho's schools. We interviewed a broadly representative sample of personnel directors in Idaho's businesses to see what their requirements were for employees today and what they expect them to be in the future. The Project also did field research in ten communities around the state, interviewing students, parents, community members, teachers, and administrators, and made informal visits to many other locations to listen to the ideas and hopes of Idahoans from all walks of life. In addition, the Project held ten panel sessions, in which teachers, administrators and other experts met to probe the strengths and weaknesses of current practices and to develop ideas for a new system capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st Century.

Thus, the findings, vision and concrete strategies for change proposed here arise from the thoughts of many Idahoans who care about education. We synthesized their ideas into a coherent plan for action. Although they cannot be held responsible for our specific recommendations, the people acknowledged in the Appendix are, in the fullest sense, participants in this proposal for change.

OVERVIEW OF THIS REPORT

Future Needs

The world is changing, and with it the lives of young people are changing. For the most part, young people growing up in Idaho today are unlikely to live in the same towns or to pursue the same occupations as their parents. A young person won't hold the same job for a lifetime, either, but instead will tend to find new work every five years or so. And, a job with the same title is likely to change radically as technology rapidly changes the workplace itself. People's roles in society outside of work are also becoming more complex. Everyone in the coming age will face the challenge of earning a living and participating in a more diverse community connected to an increasingly more complex world.

The inevitability of change means that high school graduates will need to have much higher skill levels than in the past. They will need the "new basics" — the traditional subjects, but with a focus less on facts and formulas and more on the ability to obtain and use information, think critically, communicate clearly, and solve problems. They also will need a positive attitude, the ability to collaborate, and the capacity to adapt to new and different people, places and tasks.

The future will thus place increasing demands on the schools for a higher level of excellence. Idaho's present system of K-12 public education must change dramatically to keep pace with these future needs.

Strengths to Build On

The current system has many strengths that it can build on to develop an outstanding education system geared toward that complex future. The primary strengths are:

- **a solid core of good teachers**
- **"pockets of excellence" throughout the state, where classrooms, schools, or districts have innovated and produced positive results.**

Teachers and administrators should therefore be considered to be the cornerstone of Idaho's efforts to build greater heights of educational excellence. Idaho should develop comprehensive policies that enable teachers and administrators to be innovative on a much wider scale.

Priority Areas for Improvement

However, progress can be made only if deficiencies in the present public education system are addressed directly. Reform should focus on alleviating four major deficiencies:

1. **An Increasing Number of Idaho Students have Difficulties in School.**

2. **The Mission of Schools Has Become Unclear.**

3. **Today's Curriculum and Teaching Methods Are Not Designed for Student Needs in the 21st Century.**

4. **The Education System Currently Lacks The Capability to Reach a Higher Plateau of Excellence.**

Alleviating deficiencies will not by itself result in a higher level of excellence. Reform must be guided by a larger vision of what people in the state want for their young people and how they believe the education system should be organized.

Idaho Education

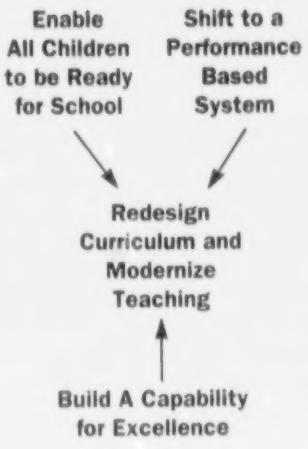
The many Idahoans who contributed to this project envision tomorrow's school system as one which would rely on its grass roots strength. Education of the future would aim to have each student realize his or her potential in a new and more complex world. Educators, business people, and community members would work together to set goals that would establish high expectations for all students. Teachers and administrators, along with parents and the local community, would share responsibility for having every student meet challenging standards. State regulations would be curtailed, teachers would be rewarded for trying new learning methods and advanced technologies, and the community would hold schools accountable for the performance of its children and young people.

Goals for Reform

This vision of a new Idaho education system can be achieved if the state establishes goals and develops a step-by-step plan for implementation.

The goals necessary to remedy the system's current deficiencies, build on its strengths, and realize this vision are listed below. The state should focus its attention and mobilize its resources to:

Goals for Reform


Enable All Children to be Ready for School
Shift to a Performance Based System
Redesign Curriculum and Modernize Teaching
Build A Capability for Excellence

- **Enable All Children to be Ready for School** in order to maximize their life-long potential and to prevent future difficulties from developing.

- **Shift to a Performance-Based System** in which goals and measurements are set statewide but local schools are held accountable for results and have control over how they meet the goals.

- **Redesign Curriculum and Modernize Teaching** so that each student can learn the skills, abilities and attitudes needed for a successful and full life in the 21st Century.

- **Build A Capability for Excellence** so that schools throughout the state will be able to operate at a new plateau of effectiveness and efficiency.

An Action Plan

The action plan to achieve these goals for reform can begin to be implemented in the 1991 legislative session. It consists of four steps.

Strengthening Prevention

1. Implementing the Goal of Enabling All Children to Be Ready for School. This report proposes a series of practical strategies that maximize the effectiveness or expand the scope of Idaho's presently successful programs for early childhood education and care— namely, strengthen and expand resource and referral agencies that provide information about comprehensive care for families of infants, extend Head Start, and upgrade the qualifications and increase the training opportunities for providers of care and education for young children. Investment in these activities aim to prevent difficulties and low achievement among children that often lead to higher school and state costs. This long-term strategy should be guided by a government office that can mobilize public and private support.

The 1991 Legislature should establish and fund an office for the coordination and oversight of programs of early childhood

education and care. By acting in 1991, the Legislature would focus planning activities in this crucial area for the 1990's.

Setting Goals for Excellence

2. Implementing the Shift to a Performance-Based System. The Legislature, the State Board of Education, and the State Department of Education should establish a participatory process, led by a Commission for Goals and Testing, to set the state's goals for students. These new goals, geared to the needs of the 21st Century, would establish high expectations to guide the restructuring of Idaho education. The same participatory process would develop statewide comprehensive examinations to test the performance of students in meeting these goals. Unlike current multiple choice tests, these examinations would require the doing of actual tasks, such as writing or working on a project with other students. The combination of state goals and comprehensive examinations to measure student performance would provide educators with a clear mission and enable Idaho to develop meaningful accountability. Educators could then be freed from excessive regulations and be held responsible for students meeting performance goals.

Pioneering Innovations

3. Implementing the Redesign of Curriculum and the Modernization of Teaching. The 1991 Legislature should fund a new program, "Idaho's Schools of the Future." The program would initiate an era of innovation.

The Schools of the Future program would provide significant new funds to schools selected competitively from around the state. Teachers in each of these schools would have time set aside to design and implement change, and they would share responsibility with the principal and parents for shaping their educational program. These schools could receive waivers from state regulations or collective bargaining agreements and, therefore, have the flexibility to become more effective and efficient. Each would revise its curriculum and modernize its teaching and school organization so that its students could meet the state's high expectations for the future. These would be the flagships for reform: all the elementary schools would have ungraded classes for the first few years; some schools would focus on technology; others would implement partnerships with the universities to improve teacher education; and still other schools would develop

ways to provide high school students with different choices of academic or career programs. But what the Schools of the Future specifically decide to do would be up to them — and they would be held accountable for results.

Schools of the Future would, in short, test the practicality and effectiveness of reforms. If the program were successful over a three to five year period, all Idaho schools would gradually, over the next ten years, become Schools of the Future. And, at that point, Idaho public education will have completed its transformation into an education system for the 21st Century.

4. Implementing the Building of A Capability for Excellence. Idaho should begin a deliberate and sustained investment strategy to build the capability of locals schools to redesign their curriculum, introduce more effective teaching methods, and meet state goals for student performance. The report suggests three strategies — strengthening the teaching profession, enhancing educational leadership, and bolstering rural education — that require such investments as higher salaries, greater use of modern electronic technologies, and more support for the training and professional growth of educators and leaders at all levels of the system. In building capability, Idaho has many options involving the pace, the areas of reform to address first, and the yearly amount of funding, but the critical decision is to proceed according to a larger vision and plan. This report describes various options and proposes initial investments for 1991.

Investing in the Future

* * *

Taken together, the four implementation steps could mark a turning point in Idaho's history. They could start the state on a practical path toward making Idaho's school system outstanding by the year 2000.

The remainder of this report discusses in detail the Project's findings and the proposed action plan.

WHAT IDAHOANS SAY ABOUT ...

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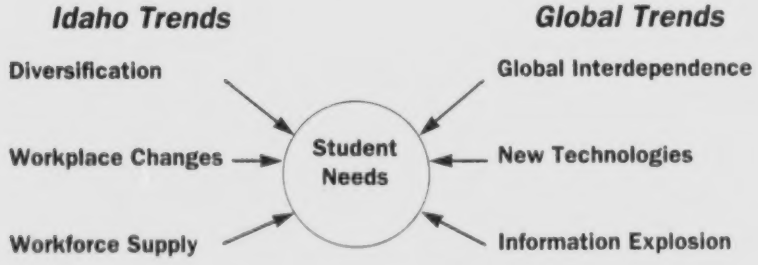
FUTURE STUDENT NEEDS

To find out what Idahoans believe the needs of students will be in the 21st Century, we conducted an investigation throughout the state, one which involved students, parents and teachers, school administrators, and community and business leaders. The Project selected ten communities to represent the diversity of Idaho and of its school districts and visited each of these school communities. In addition, we systematically interviewed people responsible for personnel at 24 representative businesses and held panel sessions in three regions of the state about Idaho's future employment trends. Among all these Idahoans — numbering close to a thousand people — a broad consensus emerged about the future needs of Idaho's students.

Challenges of the Future

World, regional and local forces affecting Idaho's future are great and, to some extent, unpredictable. Yet major trends can be discerned and prepared for. Our meetings with employers and citizens throughout the state confirmed the all-too-frequent newspaper headlines: the larger global economic movement toward interdependence, the advance of new technologies, and the information explosion are affecting Idahoans whether in large or small businesses, in rural or more urban settings. The message for the future is clear: in Idaho, as across the nation, what young people will have to learn in school is changing. In their future roles as citizens and as workers, they will need higher levels of competence to function well.

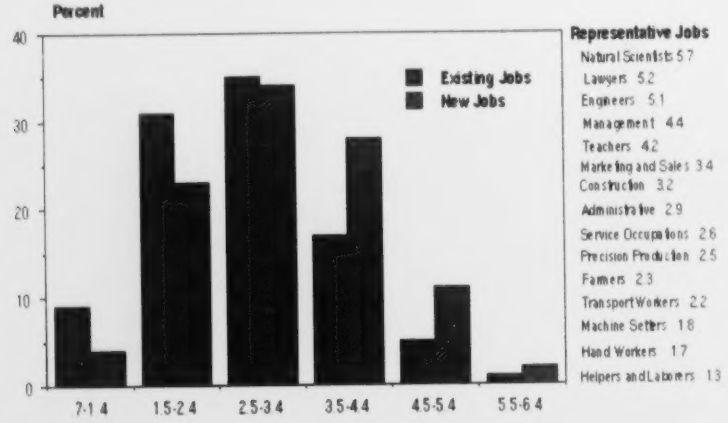
Forces Affecting Student Needs



One reason the expectations for young people have changed is that the workplace itself has changed dramatically in the last 25 years. To prepare young people for work, schools must anticipate the new workplace. Many jobs today, even those that do not require post-secondary education, do require a high level of

competence, knowledge and skill perhaps matching the level of expectation held in the past only for those going to college.

Low Skilled Jobs Are Declining Nationally



Previously, employers wanted young people to be obedient order-followers. Today, workers are expected to think for themselves, employ sophisticated problem-solving skills, and know how to work in collaboration with others. The structures of most classrooms, however, still reinforce the older values and notions, not the newer ones.

A young person can anticipate a new role as a citizen in our democracy, a role that also requires escalating levels of knowledge and ability. Public policy issues increasingly require voters who can understand scientific concepts. Some examples include environmental and waste disposal issues; water and forest management; and the rate of development of Idaho's wild lands. Being an informed voter today necessitates a higher reading level than in the past.

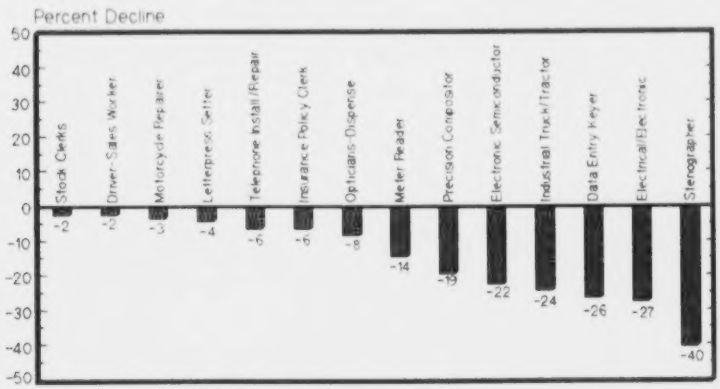
The "New Basics"

Virtually all people we interviewed — from executives to entry-level employees, from farmers to computer experts, from students to teachers — thought that schools should be expected to provide youth with a sound education leading to skills and abilities people commonly refer to as "the basics." But this expectation has a new twist for the future: basic skills will no longer be rudimentary readin', writin' and 'rithmetic; tomorrow's graduates will be expected to be literate across a variety of areas relevant to a productive life in an increasingly competitive world.

What Idaho Employers Say

In particular, Idahoans expect that young people will be literate with language, able to read, write and communicate clearly and fluently in a variety of settings. Increasingly, the global economy is becoming a daily practical reality for many Idahoans, as citizens and as workers. Each will need to develop understanding and awareness of languages, cultures and outlooks fundamentally different from those he or she grew up with. Idahoans we interviewed were unanimous in considering global knowledge and awareness as a basic skill for all students in the future, and many felt that the use of languages other than English would be essential.

Occupations on the Decline in Idaho



Idahoans also expect that young people will be literate in science and math. In this context, literacy means having a level of knowledge of scientific and mathematical concepts which goes beyond the old notion of basic math — the simple one-step calculations, math for consumers, or workplace math. Students will need to be comfortable with mathematical and scientific reasoning and be able to use them for problem-solving in both work and life situations.

According to every Idahoan we interviewed, students will also need to be computer literate. They should have keyboard skills and basic familiarity with the computer as a tool for doing tasks. They should have working familiarity with the computer, robotics, and telecommunications technologies that are rapidly becoming staples of contemporary life.

At an even more fundamental level, Idahoans expect that youth will have the ability to solve problems and know how to reason through complex steps. Some of our respondents described this as "critical thinking ability."

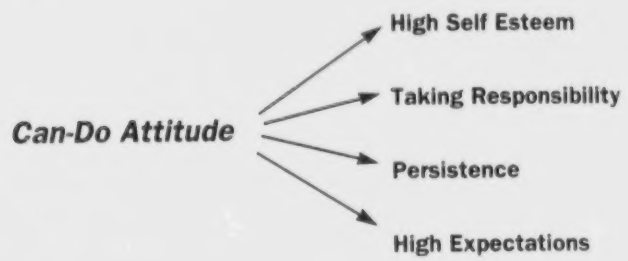
Work will become more participative and employees will be more diverse in gender, age, and ethnicity.

It was also widely noted that students will need the ability to access information, not to be crammed full of facts. In this age of information explosion, students need strategies for finding the information they need when they need it.

Can-do Attitude

Employers and workers alike agreed that, to get along in the world, school finishers will need a set of positive characteristics. They will need to hold high expectations of themselves which match those held by their families, by the schools, and by the society. A strong sense of self-esteem, confidence and competence were mentioned frequently: in short, a "can-do" attitude. Many employers and community leaders said students also will need the ability to deal with set-backs, discouragements, and failures.

Increasing competition places a premium on productive employees having a positive attitude.



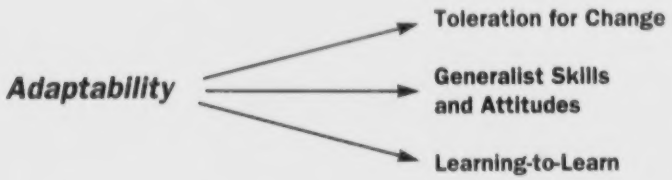
Each student will need to leave school with collaborative ability — the ability to be a team worker, a person who can cooperate on a task. Employers gave us many concrete examples of how fewer and fewer people work in isolation in today's workplace — and they expect the trend toward close collaboration to become more pronounced. In personal lives, the increasing stress of multiple roles that people fill in Idaho community life will require more finely honed skills in negotiation and deeper understanding of the principles of democracy.

Collaborative Ability

Today's entry-level employees are often deficient in basic skills, and many professional jobs are filled from outside Idaho. Tomorrow's workers need more comprehensive and higher order skills.

Finally, educators and older citizens of Idaho reminisced about how life was simpler not too many years ago and how quickly things were changing. They said that, in the face of this rapid change, young people will need the ability to adapt as a routine part of successful living. Adults of the future will need a high level of tolerance for the increasing diversity that is slowly coming to Idaho. They will need to have learned strategies for coping with change, as well as the ability to be lifelong learners.

Adaptability



Besides a shift to service sectors, jobs and workplaces will change rapidly. Citizenship will require active involvement and diverse experience.

STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON

It is always hard to weigh one state's education system against another's, but clearly Idaho compares favorably to many other states. In the most commonly used measures, Idaho students' scores on the ACT, a test taken by college-bound high school students, are about at the national average and the intermountain regional average.

The problem with such comparisons is that all states must do better because of the changing nature of the world. In short, the present national average is simply not good enough in this increasingly competitive environment. People in Idaho have a real sense of this, as the preceding section on the future needs of students clearly illustrates.

Moreover, a high percentage of Idaho students who enter high school do not graduate. Citizens and public officials alike thought this "drop-out" issue was an area that Idaho needed to address. To meet future needs, Idaho, like all other states, will have to have higher percentages of its student population graduate from high school, complete college, and receive advanced degrees. Today some companies must recruit outside of the state to fill technical and advanced managerial positions; the future predictions are for an accelerated trend toward higher technical skill levels and a need for advanced degrees.

Given the necessity of keeping pace with these changes, the practical questions are: what strengths can Idaho education build on as it moves to meet the future needs of students, what weaknesses must be shored up, and what deficiencies corrected? We put these questions to panelists and people in communities around the state. The answers they gave us about the strengths to build on are summarized below; our full report provides detailed documentation and data.

Solid Core of Good Teachers

We held a special panel meeting on the current status and ideas for the future of the K-12 education professionals in Idaho. The panel, consisting of a broadly representative group of experts from around the state, dealt with a wide array of issues: from a new long term commitment not only to the initial education of teachers but also to their continued professional development; recruitment techniques; and teacher retention. The clearest

message from that panel concerned the quality of the teaching staff in Idaho: there was a unanimity that Idaho has a solid core of high quality, dedicated teachers. Although teachers, administrators, and parents all could identify some teachers who fell down on the job, needing retraining, reinvigoration, or retirement, there was agreement that these "rotten apples" were exceptions. There is no data in the state which can be used to support these opinions, but these views also were widely held among the broader group of community people we interviewed.

This finding does not mean that efforts should not be made to improve further the quality and training of teachers; a later section of this report recommends concrete steps that might be taken. However, the strength of the teaching staff should be considered the cornerstone in Idaho's efforts to build to a greater height of educational excellence. Our recommendations accordingly rely on a local approach to moving forward, based on teacher initiative.

Pockets of Excellence

The Project collected information on exemplary educational efforts in Idaho. To no one's surprise, we found advanced innovative activities in schools in every region of the state. Idaho has working examples of instructional and school organization practices that national experts consider to be effective. Whatever the new approach — year-round schooling; cooperative learning where students play a more active role in their own education and work collaboratively with their peers; shared decision-making in which teachers and parents are involved with the school principal in shaping the educational program; the use of new technologies in the classroom and computer networking among teachers; the broadcasting of quality courses to schools at a distance from a more urban center or university; or a region's school districts working cooperatively to maximize their resources — Idaho has it.

Idaho Has Working Examples of Innovations

This finding does not mean these innovations are widespread. On the contrary, they are "pockets of excellence" that often receive little attention in the state and, more importantly, are usually not replicated in the same school, district, local region, or elsewhere. In some cases, new programs are well hidden, being kept quite separate from the "main business" of school. For

example, Idaho has a number of "alternative schools" (programs, often in separate facilities, for problem children or potential drop-outs) which set performance objectives for students, give them non-traditional support and instruction to help them meet these standards, and achieve truly inspiring results. Panelists in the full-day session we held (devoted to assessing the quality of instruction and staff development in the state) were unanimous in saying that the state is not, in general, innovative in education, despite these "pockets of excellence."

One panelist joked that people in other states were more likely to hear of his work than other educators in Idaho. Everyone laughed and shook their heads sadly as a science teacher added that she learns about innovations from outside the state.

An important conclusion can be drawn from this finding: people at the local level can create new and successful approaches to education. Thus, Idaho needs to develop policies to enable teachers and administrators to innovate on a much wider scale. Our later recommendations are based on this premise.

Other Strengths

Panelists and people we interviewed spoke of other strengths, but not with the same unanimity as above. It was pointed out that a new group of skilled school and district leaders is emerging which is attuned to the need for change, and contains outstanding local administrators throughout Idaho at all levels of schooling. However, there is no agreement on how deep or widespread their presence is. The differing viewpoints converged on the more pragmatic need to strengthen the professional development of current and upcoming administrators, particularly as Idaho moves toward major reform. This recommendation will be more concretely discussed in a later section.

An additional strength was frequently brought up in conversations and general meetings: people all across the state and from different occupations and interests feel that education should have a high priority. We were struck by the consistency and passion of this feeling that change was desirable and improvement needed. Many felt the timing for reform was right and that Idaho would respond positively to concrete steps leading to outstanding education. A note of pessimism concerned funding, an issue that all parties felt had to be addressed in a way that told Idahoans what they would get for any increased investment in education. Accordingly, this report will estimate the cost of any recommendations it makes.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

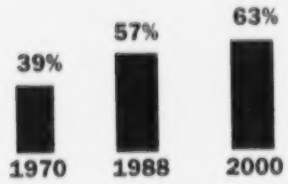
This Project did not set out to criticize the people or educational practices of Idaho. Such criticism can be inaccurate, demoralizing, and irrelevant to our goal — to contribute to an education system that can meet the challenges of the 21st Century. Nonetheless, progress will be impossible without a clear assessment of where the system must concentrate its efforts to improve. Therefore, in our panels and interviews, we asked people to identify those issues Idaho needed to address in order to achieve a higher level of excellence. Those answers on which there was the greatest consensus are grouped into four critical priorities.

1. An Increasing Number of Idaho Students have Difficulties in School. Teachers and administrators from many regions and types of school across the state told us that more children are having behavioral problems in the school. These difficulties are often disruptive of classes and create discipline problems for the school. Our respondents attributed part of this problem to changing values in society and lax parental standards. Thus, there were numerous concerns raised about how parents might be required to be responsible for their children and held accountable. Most educators we talked to were either willing to accept — or resigned to accepting — that schools would continue to act as surrogate parents.

In addition, teachers also cited many stories to illustrate another trend in Idaho: a greater number of young children seem to be coming to class unprepared for schooling. Some of them are hungry, others emotionally disturbed. A panel we held on early childhood education unanimously agreed that these anecdotes do not represent isolated instances, but rather reflect the high proportion of gainfully employed mothers in Idaho combined with the limited availability of high quality day care and preschool education in the state. Indeed, panelists maintained that the consequences of these problems go well beyond kindergarten and may be a root cause of behavioral problems in the higher grades and of unproductive, anti-social or criminal behavior in adulthood.

In Idaho, an increasingly large percentage of parents of children from birth to age eight are unavailable to their children

Dramatic Increase in Idaho Women in the Work Force



for much of the working day. Women of child-bearing age make up 44% of Idaho's paid work force. In 1988, 57.4% of Idaho women, 16 years or older, were in the work force, a significant increase from the 39.1% of 1970. Another significant increase is expected in the year 2000 when 62.7% of women are expected to be gainfully employed. Mothers are reentering the work force quickly following the births of their children, increasing the need for services to infants and their parents. In 1988, the percentage of women who have had children in the preceding 12 months and remained in Idaho's labor force was 50.8%, as compared to 31.0% in 1976.

There are an estimated 99,146 children between birth and four years old in Idaho. Another 92,895 children are ages five to nine. Of these, approximately 21% are children of families living in poverty. There are no accurate statistics in Idaho to determine how many poor children receive adequate services. One indication, however, is the number of children from low income families who have access to Idaho's highly effective, federally funded Head Start program. In 1989-90, 1,154 three- to five-year-old Idaho children were served by the federally funded Head Start program. This represents about 16.3% (or about one in six) of income eligible Idaho children.

The public and private systems of care and education have not been able to meet the needs created by the changing demographics of Idaho's families. The Children's Defense Fund (in a 1990 Report Card of Children's Services in the United States) ranks Idaho in the bottom 15% in provision of services to young children and their families. Our panel on early childhood education was unanimous in concluding that, with so many of Idaho's parents in the paid work force or living in poverty, the social support systems that families rely upon are in need of revision, expansion, and coordination.

Moreover, there is abundant evidence from national studies of Head Start and other such programs that preschool can result in educational and social gains for children, their families, and the state. Therefore, our panel concluded that the provision of high quality early childhood education and care would go a long way toward preventing those behavioral and low-achievement

problems that exist today and hinder Idaho's development of an outstanding education system.

2. The Mission of Schools Has Become Unclear. Principals in our formal panel sessions, as well as in other meetings, complained that today's schools were required to offer many courses and to take on many responsibilities that distracted them from their main mission — seeing that all students could learn to their maximum potential. In part, this issue concerned excessive state regulations and requirements, but it also involved a greater set of pressures.

One principal came to a project luncheon and read off a list of twenty-five different responsibilities that his school was supposed to meet. He said, "Just tell us what to do and we'll do it."

For example, schools are being judged by scores on standardized tests that are not related to the courses or materials the schools are required to use — or, for that matter, to the materials that the educators think the students should learn. Thus, on the one hand, schools are being forced to respond to multiple requirements and, on the other hand, are being judged by how well their students perform on tests irrelevant to these requirements.

In light of these problems, local educators strongly believed that the state should reduce regulations and, instead, establish student performance goals and standards which schools could focus their resources and educational programs on achieving.

Opinions about standardized tests were more divided, with teachers and principals voicing grave doubts and state or district level administrators emphasizing some positive uses. Local people did not want to be held accountable for student scores on "meaningless tests." However, it was agreed that Idaho's Writing Assessment was outstanding. It could be used as a model for the development of tests that require pupils to perform the task on which they were being evaluated.

The main point: Idaho presently does not have student performance goals and appropriate measurements of how well students are performing. Without these elements, highly specific and at times contradictory regulations and standardized tests have been setting the direction for education.

3. Today's Curriculum and Teaching Methods Are Not Designed for Student Needs in the 21st Century. We held a special full-day panel on curriculum, (what is taught in the schools) and one on instruction. These sessions were convened because our field visits and interviews with knowledgeable persons throughout the state consistently raised concerns about curriculum and instruction. Though it is artificial to separate them, it is convenient to present our findings about each in turn.

Curriculum

Two distinct, though not unrelated, issues emerged regarding curriculum. First, our panelists felt that many rural schools presently lacked the resources to provide a curriculum of adequate depth and scope. We called a special panel just on rural education, and these panelists also felt that introducing a richer and deeper curriculum could not be accomplished by rural schools without major changes in how rural schooling is delivered.

One panelist said, "Idaho is getting better and better at producing a curriculum for the 1950's."

Second, a broader issue affects all Idaho schools: the present curriculum is geared toward students having to learn discrete facts about specific subjects. Yet the consideration of future student needs suggested that the ability to access and use knowledge critically will be more important than specific facts. Indeed, the revolution in new information technologies renders much of the older approach of absorbing numerous details irrelevant to success in adulthood.

More generally, Idaho students will need to master the "new basics" at a much deeper and more integrated level, rather than at the specialized and separated levels followed in today's schools. In addition, they will need a "can-do" attitude, collaborative abilities, and adaptability. Revising the curriculum to respond to these student needs is central to the agenda for the reform of Idaho education.

Our panelists on the curriculum, as well as those on other panels, also pointed to specific directions that the new curriculum might take. The early childhood education panel felt that Idaho's approach to early learning ought to be rethought. In response to criticism of American education, which began with the launching of Sputnik in the late fifties, an academic approach has been pushed down to kindergarten and preschool. Many parents and

educators have been taught to believe that academic success at a very early age is requisite to academic and economic success in later life. This trend, based on misconceptions about early learning, has resulted in educators asking children to try to learn in ways that many are not intellectually ready to handle.

Idaho and several other states have recently raised the age of entry into kindergarten and first grade in the belief that older children will be able to deal with the pushed-down academic curriculum. The level of failure and retention of children in some schools in Idaho is higher in kindergarten and first grade than in other grades. A number of children are, thus, failing before they even begin. The national research suggests that children fail these early grades because the curriculum and method of instruction is inappropriate for their level of development.

"Delaying Children's entry into school... label children as failures at the outset of their school experience."

National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, 1987

The research on children's learning supports a different approach to curriculum and instruction for ages three to eight. The challenge for schools is to reinforce the naturally developing abilities of the child by means of "play" in an instructional setting that encourages children to be problem-solvers, decision-makers, and socially responsible people. Opportunities for play allow children to integrate language and intellectual, physical, and social skills. It allows them to express ideas, make choices and decisions, assume command, take control, try out, experiment, and explore. These skills are precisely the foundation for realizing the future needs discussed earlier.

At about age seven, children are able to manipulate abstractions, which are the content of more formal schooling. They are able to solve problems more easily, use written words and numbers, and work with abstract ideas. Traditional academic instruction is more appropriately begun at this stage than in kindergarten, first or even second grade.

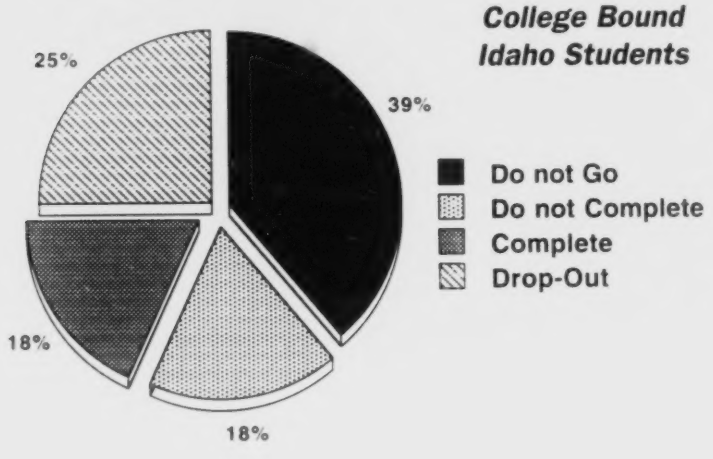
In sum, the panelists concluded that Idaho education could begin on a firm foundation if the primary grades placed emphasis on children developing decision-making, thinking and "playing" abilities.

Panelists agreed that the curriculum after the primary grades

also needs rethinking. Serious concerns were raised about the practice of "tracking" that is common in American education. Tracking means the placement of intermediate or high school students in educational programs which are separate from one another — for example, the academic, general education, or vocational tracks. The academic track is generally the most demanding. More is expected of these students, and they score higher on standardized tests. The other tracks have lower expectations and higher dropout rates. However, research has shown that students can learn more when there are no tracks. A number of panelists hoped that tracking could be eliminated. They felt schools should concentrate on all students learning the essential material needed for the "new basics," along with the other attitudes and abilities that compose future student needs.

A related concern was expressed in the curriculum panel that many Idaho students do not enroll in or finish a four-year college. Therefore, panelists did not think it was appropriate for the new curriculum to be geared exclusively toward the college-bound. Yet all panelists felt that every student would need to achieve a fundamental grasp of the "new basics." Several panelists, and others we interviewed in more depth, suggested that high quality vocational or technical possibilities be made available toward the end of high school, without sacrificing the high standards required of all students.

The Future of a High School Class
(percentages are approximations)



The paradox of Idaho education surfaced early in our meetings on instruction and on the education professions: Idaho has a solid core of good teachers, but, in the view of our panelists, most teachers use very traditional teaching methods. These methods, which have not changed much over the decades, were designed for an age that no longer exists. This paradox is particularly puzzling because Idaho does have "pockets of excellence" where exemplary practices can be found.

We asked panelists why good teachers retain ineffective methods. They listed the following basic issues:

- **A Lack of Time** – Teachers have an extremely heavy work load which limits the time they have for their own professional development. A high school teacher, for example, may be responsible for the instruction of 150 or more students a day in a total of five or more classes each meeting five days a week for almost the full 180 days for which they are paid. Although up to three of these instructional days can be used for non-instructional activities such as professional development, this allocation is much too little for learning about modern teaching methods. In addition to instruction and class preparation, teachers also must grade papers and do other assignments. Some teachers use part of their "unpaid" summers to stay current with their field and subject areas, but many in Idaho have summer jobs. We were told that some teachers even "moonlight" and have weekend or night jobs to meet family expenses.

- **Limited Access to Staff Development** – Aside from a few districts in Idaho, most teachers have limited access to training or professional development activities that focus on newer instructional methods. The universities are perhaps the major supplier of staff development, but distances between the universities and the vast majority of districts are so great that many teachers, particularly in rural areas, cannot take advantage of this resource. Our panelists suggested that "distance learning" technologies — the transmission of video programs or more interactive televideo conferencing — might help the access problem

in remote areas. It was also suggested that more active outreach from the universities coupled with regional cooperation among school districts might provide additional access.

- **District Leadership and Limited District Resources–** The problems above could be solved in part if districts had more money to devote to innovative efforts. It was reported that some districts feel they are stretched far too thin to afford "extras." However, some teachers felt that their districts could provide more staff development by shifting other funding from areas of low priority. These are hard questions to sort out. Nonetheless, it is clear that innovations will require funding — whether from new or redirected monies — that is set aside for that purpose. A number of educators raised a related issue: they believed that their district leadership did not reward or encourage innovation. Many panelists expressed a view that the lack of support for implementing new ideas was more the norm than the exception in Idaho school districts.

Innovations must arise locally, not be imposed from above.

- **State Regulations –** Teacher and administrator panelists believed that a variety of state regulations hampered their efforts to develop scheduling or curriculum innovations. The prime examples cited of over-regulation were the detailed specificity about which courses must be taken at the various grade levels and how much time must be spent on specific subjects. Several panelists felt that they wanted to be free to arrange instruction in ways that would be most effective — and then be held accountable for results.

Although panelists and other practitioners proposed a wide range of solutions to overcome these deficiencies, the common thread in their suggestions can be easily reported: innovations must arise locally, not be imposed from above.

4. The Education System Currently Lacks The Capability to Reach a Higher Plateau of Excellence. The thousand or so Idahoans who contributed their thoughts to this project had high aspirations for education. The best way to summarize their hopes is to say that they believed Idaho education could be among the

best in the nation. However, they knew that an investment in education had to be made in order to achieve this higher plateau. Three areas stood out as the most frequently mentioned concerns.

First, many knowledgeable respondents said it was increasingly difficult to attract quality teachers to the profession and then retain them in Idaho. Despite the powerful attractions of Idaho's high quality of life, the pay scale for teachers is generally below those of most neighboring states and is below the national average. Some districts have higher salary schedules and better working conditions than others in Idaho, and, therefore, are able to have their pick of quality staff. However, the more general problem is that graduates from Idaho's schools often leave the state, and Idaho has to rely on attracting out-of-state people to jobs in education. Moreover, the discrepancy between the salaries of teachers and those of members of other professions in Idaho has grown large enough that business itself is the main competitor for Idaho teachers. More general concerns about working conditions — for example, the lack of opportunities for professional development — also are major considerations for an Idahoan's decision to leave the profession or the state.

Idaho Salaries Below National Average

	Superintendent	Secondary Principal	Elementary Principal	Classroom Teacher
Idaho Average	$44,171	$ 36,799	$ 35,409	$ 22,732
National Average	$71,190	$52,987	$ 45,909	$ 29,608
% Idaho Below Nat'l Average	38%	31%	23%	23%

Second, the issue of attracting and retaining skilled district and school administrators was placed on the agenda by members of several panels. Many of the considerations about teachers apply for principals and superintendents. Salary issues are a real concern for people who fill leadership positions which are comparable to managerial positions in the private sector. Several local board members which we interviewed, as well as a number of state leaders, pointed to the great need for superintendents and principals to have opportunities to stay current with developments in education and to hone their leadership skills. This issue also is relevant for lay Board of Trustees members, many of whom, we were told, may not be familiar with the requirements of their positions.

District Responses to State Department Survey

Question: "In your opinion, how can we attract and retain qualified personnel in Education?"

Higher Salaries	**73%**
Better professional image	**15%**
Better working conditions & facilities	**12%**
Better fringe & retirement benefits	**10%**

The third area of system capacity pervaded all our discussions: Idaho's districts are mostly rural, with many located in sparsely populated regions. Our panel on rural education spent part of the day on the great strengths of rural schools, but most of the time was directed toward describing and suggesting creative solutions to the limited capacity of many rural schools to provide a comprehensive, in-depth and high quality educational program. Although consolidation was discussed, it was seen as just one way among others to address a complex issue. The predominant suggestions concerned the use of modern technologies and of regional cooperative arrangements to support rural education.

A VISION FOR IDAHO EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The primary objective of the Idaho Education Project was to put forth a vision for the future of Idaho education. In our interviews and discussions with people from all walks of life across the state, we asked what they would like for tomorrow's education, knowing that today's world is rapidly changing. This is the vision we synthesized from people's hopes and desires.

The System

Education of the future would aim to have each student realize his or her potential in a new and more complex world. Educators, business people, and community members would work together to set goals that would establish high expectations for all students. Teachers and administrators, along with parents and the local community, would share responsibility for having every student meet challenging standards. State regulations would be curtailed, teachers would be rewarded for trying new learning methods and advanced technologies, and the community would hold schools accountable for the performance of its children and young people.

Students

Tomorrow's schools would be a place where students want to learn — where there are clear goals and high expectations, but also excitement about learning among all students, not just the academically inclined. One of many parents we talked with told us of his three children: one always "hit the books"; one "plowed along"; and one had to be "dragged kicking and screaming." The schools of Idaho's future would help each of these three students prepare for the more complex and competitive world they will inherit.

High school students envision being challenged more than they currently are, regardless of whether they are college-bound, headed directly for the job market, or unsure of their direction. In the future, students would play a more active role in their own learning — and be responsible for achieving their maximum potential. They would work on real projects — with peers in their schools, in Idaho, in the nation, in the world at large — that would give them an opportunity to develop the collaborative skills and positive attitudes essential to successful adulthood. They would learn the most fundamental of the "new basics" of education by doing it — applying knowledge to the solution of real problems.

Children in elementary schools do not think of futures, but their experiences, too, would be quite different. All young children, particularly those from low-income families, would have access to quality care and early childhood education that would lay a healthy foundation for school and life. They would enter a school environment similar to those already in place in many of the world's industrialized countries in which the early years would focus on their social, emotional, and creative development, deemphasizing more formal academics. Then, when children are ready developmentally, not just chronologically, they would be well prepared to tackle core subjects that all students would need to master.

Parents

Parents would be much more involved than at present. Young parents would receive parenting information and participate in preschool and primary school activities. They would help at home in supporting their children's learning, and working mothers and fathers would be given regular leave time to be involved in public school activities. Most importantly, they would share the responsibility for their school achieving excellence.

Teachers

Many teachers, particularly outstanding ones, currently feel pessimistic about their future in Idaho education. After about ten years in the profession, some feel "stuck" in terms of career development, income, and their own intellectual growth. In the future, teachers will share with their colleagues, the principal, parents, and students in making essential decisions about those things that matter most — creating effective teaching and learning environments in the school. They would work closely with their peers, perhaps in teams or other arrangements that break down the inefficient and demoralizing isolation of teachers. Each would have a telephone, which would be both a symbol that the system trusts teachers to assume normal adult responsibilities as well as a means for them to communicate with parents, colleagues, experts, and students at home. And they would have access to computers, along with the training and support necessary for them to make their classroom management and teaching more effective, efficient, exciting and personally rewarding. They would be held accountable for results, but would participate in assessing students in ways that truly reflect how much pupils have learned. They would earn a salary more commensurate with wages for teachers

in other states. Most importantly, teachers would have time dedicated exclusively to their professional growth so that they could continue to learn in their subject areas and to use the most modern approaches to offer every student success.

Schools

Schools in the future would be much more different from one another than they are today. There would be less regulation and more diversity to match the diverse needs of the students. Schools would use new ways to organize time and resources and make use of technologies that allow even remote rural schools to be linked interactively with classrooms around the state and country. The school would once again become the center of the community, as it has been and occasionally still is in Idaho.

Educational Leadership

The 1980's were a hard time for school, district, and state leadership of education. The forces of change often blamed administrators for the failure of schools to keep pace with increasing social and education demands. In the 1990's, principals would work closely with faculty and community to provide leadership that can take Idaho education into the new era. They would have the opportunity for professional development and interaction with their peers in education and in business. Superintendents in rural and in urban Idaho also would have prospects for continued education relevant to their position and be able to meet regularly with their colleagues to develop more efficient and effective ways to manage their districts in a time of change. Trustees, too, would receive appropriate training, and they, like other district administrators, could hold televideo conferences with people in other parts of the state and the nation.

The State Board's role would be more sharply defined as helping to set performance goals for public education and helping to hold schools accountable for real progress. The State Department of Education would be the major source of research and development for the system, and its role as the monitor of compliance with state regulations would shift more toward being the facilitator of change.

GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE

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GOALS FOR REFORM

The preceding sections describe what Idahoans told us about the future needs of students, about the strengths and deficiencies of the current education system for meeting these needs, and about their vision for a new education system. They also proposed specific ideas for reforms that would help realize the vision, while eliminating, or at least alleviating, the main deficiencies. We synthesized these many proposals into the following broad set of goals for reform of the Idaho education system. The state should:

- **Enable All Children to be Ready for School** in order to maximize their life-long potential and to prevent future difficulties from developing.

- **Shift to a Performance-Based System** in which goals and measurements are set statewide but local schools are held accountable for results and have control over how they meet the goals.

- **Redesign the Curriculum and Modernize Teaching** so that each student can learn the skills, abilities and attitudes needed for a successful and full life in the 21st Century.

- **Build A Capability for Excellence** so that schools throughout the state will be able to operate at a new plateau of effectiveness and efficiency.

Using these goals as a starting point, the Project developed an action plan consisting of specific strategies for accomplishing the goals within ten years. We then devised an implementation plan that includes various budget options. The following sections summarize the action plan and the means for implementation.

ENABLE ALL CHILDREN TO BE READY FOR SCHOOL

The Goal

All children, from birth to age five, should have a firm foundation of care and early childhood education to enable them to realize their maximum potential.

The period of early childhood education is generally considered to be from birth to age eight, but we have divided our recommendations into two parts in line with existing arrangements in Idaho. A later section recommends action strategies for providing a solid base of learning for public school children ages five to eight. The present section concerns infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Though the definition of "preschooler" is arbitrary and, we believe, should be flexible, the recommendations here focus on children from birth through approximately four years old.

The Strategies

1. **Establish an Office to Coordinate and Provide Oversight for the Mobilization of Efforts to Improve Public and Private Support for Early Childhood Care and Education.**

2. **Strengthen Existing Programs of Information and Comprehensive Care for Families of Infants.**

3. **Extend Head Start and Encourage Quality Care/Education for Children of Preschool Age.**

4. **Upgrade the Qualifications for Providers of Care/Education for Young Children and Expand Higher Education's Capacity to Provide Early Childhood Education Training.**

Discussion

Our panel on early childhood education reminded us that prevention is less costly than remediation. The discussion on deficiencies in the preceding section reviewed the need for Idaho to invest in services for poor and low-income families in order to

prevent problems in school and later in life. But prevention itself costs money, and a fully comprehensive program for families with young children would be costly indeed. Some panelists called for business to be more actively involved in solving this broad economic and social problem. The issue of extending public or private support for services to working mothers and low-income families may be a central issue of the 1990's.

Our approach is to suggest practical strategies that maximize the effectiveness or expand the scope of Idaho's presently successful programs. The ten-year plan presented in this report's last section assumes that Idaho will invest in early childhood education and care during this decade. Yet this investment must be guided by a government office that can mobilize public and private support. We recommend that the 1991 Legislature establish this office as a matter of priority, independent of other actions they may take to support early childhood care and education.

Strategy 1. Establish an Office to Coordinate and Provide Oversight for the Mobilization of Efforts to Improve Public and Private Support for Early Childhood Care and Education. We recommend that the state establish and fund an office to analyze, coordinate, and be an advocate for care and education programs for young children. Such programs are now administered by a wide range of government departments, and an additional number of programs are administered by the private sector. Child care licensing and adult child development centers for young children with disabilities are carried out in the Department of Health and Welfare; some education programs are overseen in the Department of Education. There is no agency or office which takes full responsibility for young children or for their advocacy. This new office could be established in one of various places — the most likely ones being the Governor's Office or the State Department of Education.

Strategy 2. Strengthen Existing Programs of Information and Comprehensive Care for Families of Infants. Children from birth through four years old are served in Idaho by a variety of programs: for-profit and not-for-profit child care centers, family day care homes, Head Start, YMCA preschools and child care

centers, library story hours, church schools, programs for children with disabilities in public schools and in Health and Welfare child development centers, and care in the homes of friends or relatives. Children are also served by federally funded and state assisted nutrition programs and well baby clinics.

However, the quality of these services varies greatly, and many families do not know of or have access to the various services which exist. Access even to minimum services is limited particularly for low-income families and for families in remote rural locations. An important first step is for the state to assure that parents can receive information about existing programs and about the fundamentals of parenting.

Actions for Strategy 2

Matching Funds

i. Surveys of Idaho parents and child care providers indicate that one of the greatest needs of families, especially those of infants and toddlers, is finding quality child care. Incentives to develop and maintain community resource and referral programs would benefit young children and their families by giving parents a recognized source from which to seek information about quality services. The resource and referral programs also serve as an information and planning service for people who wish to open a family day care home or center, or to upgrade the services they already offer. Idaho has an outstanding example of a resource and referral program in Child Care Connections in Ada County. We recommend that this and other existing programs be supported via matching funds so that they can expand their services. There presently are plans to extend resource and referral programs to other areas in the state. We recommend that this development be supported by state seed money to enable families throughout Idaho to have access to resource and referral services.

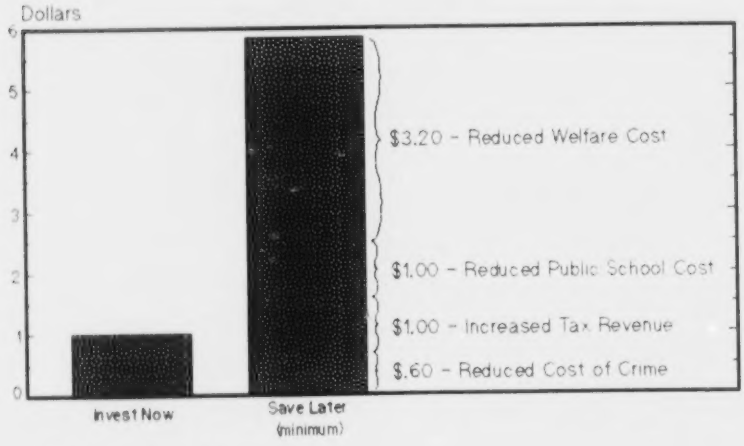
Agricultural Extension Services

ii. Following the advice of several panelists, we recommend that the state fund a specialist in child development to work in the Agricultural Extension service. This specialist would develop and disseminate

child development materials and provide training to county extension agents. The county agents would coordinate with local agencies to provide services to very young children and their families. There are plans to install a system of downlink satellite receivers with installations in each Idaho county Agriculture Extension office. This technology can provide an excellent means for child development specialists to send information to families of young children. Since every county in Idaho has an existing Agriculture Extension office, there would thus be easy access to parenting and child development information.

Strategy 3. Extend Head Start and Encourage Quality Care/Education for Children of Preschool Age. Children in poverty are typically suffering from inadequate health care, immunization, and dental care; from nutritional deficiencies; from limited educational environments; and from parental apathy or ignorance. A large percentage of these children receive no or inadequate preschool experience.

Preschool Investment Yields High Returns



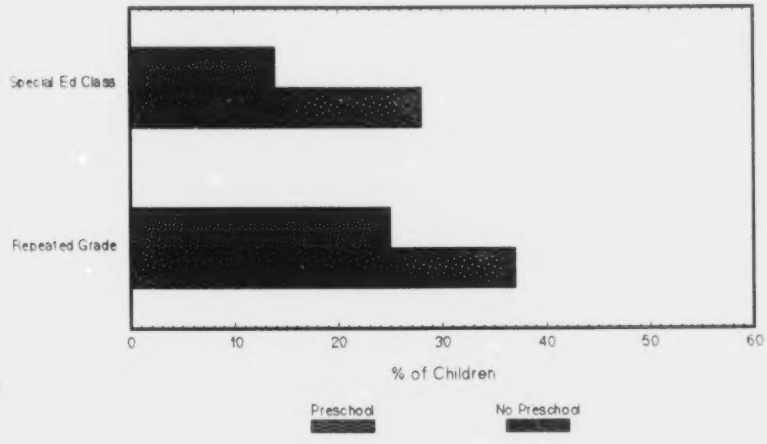
Actions for Strategy 3

i. Head Start is a comprehensive service program that offers compensatory intervention to give children a head start on physical health, dental health, education, and parental support. However, only 16.3% of income-eligible children in Idaho are served by Head Start.

Head Start is proven to be a cost effective and efficient program for three- and four-year-old children. We recommend that Idaho subsidize Head Start to offer its program in more locations so that more income-eligible children have access to these services.

ii. Some Idaho children from low income families are eligible for Head Start, but live in areas in Idaho not served by its programs. For these cases, we recommend that the state contract with existing private early childhood care and education programs to provide comparable services to the families. The state would purchase care and educational service only from those providers who meet quality and care standards.

Strategy 4. Upgrade the Qualifications for Providers of Care/Education for Young Children and Expand Higher Education's Capacity to Provide Early Childhood Education Training. The benefit of preschool or early childhood care depends on its quality: good programs can make a great difference in children's lives; bad programs can be neutral or worse. Therefore, it is crucial that Idaho follow the lead of many other states in gradually upgrading the standards of providers.



Effects of Preschool Education

Actions for Strategy 4

Higher Standards

i. The state should set quality standards for programs of care and education of children under age five. Presently, the physical setting and operation of programs for young children that offer "educational programs" are exempt from state child care licensing administered under the Department of Health and Welfare. No standards have been established even for basic fire protection and safety, much less for curriculum, nutrition, health, or parent involvement. Child care has no quality assurance agency in Idaho. Much of the care system offered for young children, which includes large numbers of family day care homes, operates without any form of accountability and without written standards. We recommend that standards for child care centers, preschools, and family day care homes be established, comparable to the guidelines set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Certification

ii. Child care providers and preschool teachers should be required to be appropriately trained and certified. Research on programs for young children suggests that higher quality programs have staff who are trained in child development and have experience with young children. We recommend that Idaho gradually require child care providers and preschool teachers to become certified as Child Development Associates or to seek degrees in child development or early childhood education.

Training

iii. If the state makes a commitment to support early childhood education and care, there will be a great need for training of specialists in early childhood education. We recommend that the state support the four- and two-year public institutions of higher education to hire additional faculty in these areas. Further, we recommend that the state develop certification for early childhood/child development specialists that spans educational programs for children from birth to age five.

SHIFT TO A PERFORMANCE BASED SYSTEM

The Goal

Citizens, businesses and educators should determine statewide student goals and expectations, but local schools should have maximum flexibility in how goals are met and be held accountable for results.

The Strategies

1. **Involve Educators, Business, and the Community in Setting Visionary Statewide Goals for Student Performance**

2. **Develop New Statewide Assessments of Student Performance and Institute A Comprehensive Examination System**

3. **Develop Broad Curriculum Frameworks for the Schools, but Pull Back from Restrictive Regulation.**

4. **Assist the Public to Hold Schools Accountable and Intervene in Chronically Failing Schools**

Discussion

According to our interviews and panelists, Idaho has a major deficiency which must be overcome: public schools have too many missions and no overarching sense of purpose. Statewide goals for education must be established that Idahoans agree are the right ones. Only then can reform be successfully launched.

Strategy 1. Involve Educators, Business, and the Community in Setting Visionary Statewide Goals for Student Performance. At the present time, Idaho's goals for education are implicitly defined by course requirements and tests that educators consider to be largely irrelevant to student learning. There is confusion and a lack of clarity. The state must change this situation and make a clear statement of its educational goals, a statement that would be meaningful to the public and educators alike.

We recommend that Idaho establish a process that relies on local educators, parents, businesses, and community people to define goals for education. The goals should be those skills, attitudes, and abilities that Idahoans believe are essential for student success in the future. By having clear goals about the performance expected of students, schools would have a defined mission. They would be able to revise their curriculum and modernize their teaching to meet these goals. In particular, we recommend that the State Board of Education engage in a continuous, systematic and broadly participatory process to establish performance goals for student learning.

Actions for Strategy 1

Goals and Testing Commission

i. The State Board should establish a Goals and Testing Commission, similar to the Professional Standards Commission, with appointed members representing Idaho's diversity and including parents, students, state-level and local educators, and business and community leaders.

Standards Reviewed Regularly

ii. The Commission would determine statewide goals for the performance of students that reflect those essential skills, abilities, and attitudes that all students will need to be successful in the future. The Commission would work to establish which skills, attitudes, and abilities are deemed to be essential by Idahoans, and it would focus on articulating goals for performance only in the essential areas. The goals should not be stated in terms of required courses. The Commission would be a standing commission that would review the statewide goals every three years and assess the state's progress toward meeting the goals on a yearly basis.

Public Participation

iii. To discuss and determine what the goals should be, the Commission would conduct public meetings and more informal inquiries in communities representative of Idaho's diversity. The Commission would use public media and other available means to try to assure high attendance from educators, parents, students, and

community members. It would be responsible for summarizing and articulating the findings from these public sessions, which would be widely disseminated before being adopted by the State Board of Education.

Strategy 2. Develop New Statewide Assessments of Student Performance and Institute Comprehensive Examinations. Public education is presently judged by the scores students receive on tests. These scores are largely unconnected to how successful the students are likely to be in the future. The tests themselves generally do not assess the essential skills, abilities, and attitudes that we have called the "new basics." Nor do they assess the set of positive attitudes, collaborative abilities, and adaptability needed for success. Most are multiple-choice exams designed to be scored by computers. This testing procedure does not simulate any important task in life. No wonder educators are resentful of being judged on the basis of student scores on these multiple-choice examinations. Teachers did not create the exams, and they teach material that often has little to do with the content of the tests.

Assessment of Performance on Real Tasks

Idaho has developed a better testing procedure, one that could be aligned with new statewide goals for student performance. This test is the Writing Assessment, in which students are asked to perform a task that is critical for their future — writing. It was designed by teachers, and teachers grade the results. It measures student performance, and because students are actually performing the task being assessed, it is called a performance-based assessment.

We recommend that the state develop a performance-based system, relying on comprehensive examinations that assess those skills, abilities, and attitudes that the state considers essential to the future success of students. These examinations would be comparable to those of many industrialized countries in their scope and importance.

Actions for Strategy 2

i. With the advice and counsel of the State Department of Education, the Goals and Testing Commission should appoint a paid staff to develop performance-based assessments in the essential areas defined by the Commission. The majority of the staff would consist of teachers together with local and state administrators, university faculty, and community representatives. The Commission could hire out-of-state experts on performance-based testing to aid the staff's work.

Designed by Teachers

ii. The performance-based assessments would be developed over three years. During this time, they would be field tested to assess their reliability.

iii. When ready, the examinations would be administered over one or two days to allow sufficient time for students to demonstrate their skills, abilities, and attitudes. The examination would include writing and problem-solving activities that might be done individually and with other students. Since part of the examination would require the observation of students performing a project or a task, teachers — other than the students' teacher — would administer the exam.

Graded by Teachers

iv. Teachers from around the state would grade the examination, as is done with the Writing Assessment.

Results to Students

v. The state would not establish a pass-fail grade, but rather simply report on performance. Each student, along with his or her parents and teachers, would receive a full evaluation of the test and an analysis of the student's performance. The student's teacher would be expected to review the results and offer suggestions for improvement. A student could take the examination more than once and the test results could be made available to prospective employers or colleges and universities.

vi. The state would report the results of the examinations for each school to the public and include these scores in a Report Card for the school.

School Results

vii. The performance assessments would be administered periodically at the end of transitional periods, for example, at the end of grade 6 and grade 10.

Strategy 3. Develop Broad Curriculum Frameworks for the Schools, but Pull Back from Restrictive Regulation. The previous recommendations imply a change in the leadership role played by the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education, and a revision of the methods both use to fulfill their constitutionally set responsibility to provide for a general, uniform and thorough system of public education. The strategies above suggest that strong state direction for education is needed at the level of goal setting, but that a participatory process should be used to determine the goals. Here we propose that the State Board and the State Department develop curriculum frameworks for future student needs and that they once again rely on local teachers and administrators for this development work. With the provision of goals, student examinations, and curriculum frameworks, the state can exercise its leadership without dictating to educators the specific means for realizing the goals. Accordingly, restrictive regulations could be removed; the next section proposes a practical way to eliminate unnecessary regulations. Also, we must defer another strategic priority to a later section on building the system's capacity: panelists felt strongly that most Idaho schools currently lack the capacity to redesign their curriculum. The thrust of our proposals is to challenge — and rely on — local educators to make deep change. They will need help in fulfilling this expectation.

Actions for Strategy 3

i. The State Department should continue to develop broad curriculum frameworks so that local schools can use them to revise their curriculum. The new curriculum frameworks would call for higher expectations for both students and teachers. The challenge at the local level will be to shape a coherent

New Curriculum Framework

curriculum that would emphasize the integration of knowledge across the "new basics" and, at the same time, stress the formation of collaborative abilities, positive attitudes, and adaptability.

ii. Parallel to the processes for setting goals and for producing student assessments, the process for generating curriculum frameworks should be visionary, broadly participatory, and on-going. The State Department of Education should lead this process, one which should involve representative and expert panels to conceive of and draft the frameworks.

Schools Develop Their Curriculum

iii. The frameworks should be a vehicle for communicating curricular intent and models to districts and schools, but always with the understanding that local educators would use them as a starting point for developing their more detailed curriculum. The frameworks would not have the force of regulations.

Strategy 4. Assist the Public to Hold Schools Accountable and Intervene in Chronically Failing Schools. The establishment of meaningful goals and easily interpreted assessments of student performance are the building blocks for accountability. In addition, the state and the public need to share in the responsibility of making sure that schools meet the goals. Although state goals set standards, local people must determine expectations for their youngsters. And they must pressure and support their schools to improve. The state also can help. First, the State Department of Education can provide information on student performance and on other school characteristics that might assist the community in deciding on appropriate expectations for their students. Report Cards for schools published by the Department are one vehicle for informing the public. The next section proposes that the public be involved in evaluating the performance of schools on a periodic basis when a state grant for innovation is up for renewal. Second, the state can intervene more directly in schools where students consistently fail to meet state goals. Such intervention gives more authority to the State Department of Education, but it would be authority which could be used only as a last resort. Therefore, we recommend that the state develop a process of intervention.

Actions for Strategy 4

i. The Goals and Testing Commission would set the criteria for determining whether a school should be considered to be chronically failing.

ii. Three levels of intervention would be established. Level 1 would put a district on notice that a school is falling below expectations. The State Department could initiate this action, inform the local community of the situation, and ask the public to help the district improve matters. In addition, parents could take independent action. Parents could petition the State Board to designate a school as being in Level 1, and the State Board could hold hearings on the matter.

iii. Level 2 would be initiated in the same way. At this level, a school would be required to submit an improvement plan to the State Department, and hearings about the plan would be held by the local Board. The plan could request additional funding, technical assistance, or waivers from state regulations or collective bargaining agreements. The State Board of Education would decide what assistance should be given.

iv. Level 3 would be triggered by the State Department and be approved by the State Board. In this case, they would have broad powers to act to remedy the local situation. These powers could include consolidation, removal of the local Board, the replacement of district and personnel, and the infusion of new funds. As a last resort, the school or district could be placed in temporary receivership.

REDESIGN CURRICULUM AND MODERNIZE INSTRUCTION

The Goal

All schools should redesign their curriculum to meet the needs of all students for skills, abilities and attitudes essential for the 21st Century. All schools should provide high quality instruction in which students are active learners and collaborate with their peers and in which teachers play diverse roles to further the learning of each pupil.

The Strategies

1. **Provide Incentives for Schools to Redesign Their Curriculum and to Reorganize Instruction.**

2. **Enable Teachers to Have Non-Instructional Time for Learning New Curriculum and Teaching Approaches.**

3. **Establish Shared Decision-Making as the Norm in Idaho Schools.**

4. **Remove Regulations that Limit Innovation.**

5. **Restructure Early Grades to Provide Learning Appropriate to the Developmental Differences of Students.**

6. **Eliminate the Tracking of Students into Separate Educational Programs Based on Ability and Provide High School Students with Options for Different Career Paths.**

7. **Support Schools to Integrate Modern Electronic Technologies into Instruction.**

8. **Establish Several Schools in Different Locations to be Partners with Universities for Improving Teacher Training.**

Discussion

Idahoans told us that curriculum and instruction needed to be rethought and restructured. They also pin-pointed problems that were preventing schools from doing so, and suggested areas to emphasize in developing reforms. The list above condenses these ideas into specific strategies whose implementation would accomplish the thorough reforms they advocated.

Strategy 1. Provide Incentives for Schools to Redesign Their Curriculum and to Reorganize Instruction. This strategy is based on the premise that Idaho should build on the strength of local educators. Rather than state mandates requiring specific curriculum or teaching approaches, it would be more effective for the state to provide the financial support necessary for teachers and administrators to create educational programs appropriate to the local situation. The state's other role was proposed in the last section — establishing goals, meaningful student assessments, and broad curriculum frameworks. Implementation should be up to the schools.

Strategy 2. Enable Teachers to Have Non-Instructional Time for Learning New Curriculum and Teaching Approaches. Teachers simply do not have adequate time to plan, develop and implement deep change; nor do they have the more reflective time to grow professionally. It would be a mistake to rob instructional time to pay for professional development. Consequently, we propose that teachers be paid for additional days devoted exclusively to planning and implementing change.

Strategy 3. Establish Shared Decision-Making as the Norm in Idaho Schools. "Shared decision-making" simply means that all members of a school's community participate in critical decisions. Many issues need to be resolved to put this process into practice. Idaho has a number of outstanding examples of schools that involve teachers, parents, community members, and even students as partners in making significant decisions about the school and its educational program. The movement to have a more participatory form of management is becoming more widely adopted across the nation in business and, now, in schools. Its particular strength in educational settings is two-fold.

First, the active participation of all members of the school and its community fosters individual commitment and responsibility to school goals developed collaboratively. Idahoans, especially teachers, fervently desire the active participation of parents in their children's education in the home and in the school. A key to the involvement of parents may well lie in their sharing in responsibilities at the school. We interviewed several parents involved in this process. Their enthusiasm was infectious. Teachers and administrators also spoke of being given a "new lease on life" as a result of their experience in shared decision-making.

Second, shared decision-making models in the school the cooperative behavior students will need to learn for success in adulthood.

Selecting New Administration	**3%**
Making Decision About New Teachers	**13%**
Setting Promotion and Retention Policies	**34%**
Deciding on Student Tracking	**48%**
Shaping Curriculum	**67%**
Choosing Text and Tracking Materials	**83%**

Idaho Teacher Involvement in Decision Making

Strategy 4. Remove Regulations that Limit Innovation. This proposal speaks to the common feeling that state regulations have become too directive or constraining. Although all regulations obviously should not be removed, we will suggest below a specific process for weeding out current regulations that may prevent Idaho's best schools from undertaking dramatic restructuring. Our intention is not to eliminate any particular troublesome rule; rather we propose a new system of accountability, as outlined in the preceding section, that makes many regulations unnecessary. The practical issue addressed below is how to go about deregulation systematically.

Strategy 5. Restructure Early Grades to Provide Learning Appropriate to the Developmental Differences of Students. This strategy proposes a new departure for the early grades of elementary schools — kindergarten and grades 1 and 2. At this primary school level, we propose that classes be ungraded and students be grouped according to their stage of physical, emotional, and intellectual development, as opposed to being

grouped by their age. This approach, which is used in many industrialized countries, would provide children with a superior foundation for more formal instruction in later grades. The reasons for believing this strategy would yield significant benefits was addressed in an earlier part of this report (see Priority Areas for Improvement).

Strategy 6. Eliminate the Tracking of Students into Separate Educational Programs Based on Ability and Provide High School Students with Options for Different Career Paths. Many task force reports focus on "at-risk" students. This Project takes a different approach. We are proposing comprehensive reforms that address underlying conditions in schools which contribute to their inability to deal with every student as an individual. In the new education system envisioned by Idahoans, educators would have the capacity to assist all students in learning. The needs of potential drop-outs would be addressed as part of the overall goal of making sure that all students learn to their full potential. The strategies concerning early childhood education are examples of our approach, one which looks at basic causes and proposes fundamental reform.

Another example concerns a practice that, according to research, lowers student achievement for the majority of students and increases the likelihood of students dropping out of school before graduating. The practice, called "tracking", arises from the placement of students in intermediate schools or high schools into different programs according to their past achievement at lower grades. Students in the lower "tracks" are expected to learn less and, therefore, receive less demanding curriculum. Studies have shown that they do, in fact, learn less and are much more likely to drop out.

In addition to ethical issues that could be raised about this practice in Idaho and in the nation, both employers and panelists felt that Idaho needs all its students to master the essential skills, abilities, and attitudes identified earlier in this report. Therefore, tracking should be eliminated, and schools should develop ways to treat each student as an individual who may need more time or a different teaching approach to learn the same essential material as his or her peers. Experts believe that most young people can learn

the "new basics" before the end of high school. This leaves approximately the last two years of high school as a time when students could concentrate on their transition from secondary school to work or higher education. A variety of national reports propose that the transition time should be used to provide students with the choice of different educational programs — college preparation; technical, vocational or professional training; experiences in social service professions or in community work, etc. Some states have established programs that enable students to take these programs in public or private institutions of higher learning, as well as in any high school of their choice. These programs hold the promise of sharply reducing the number of Idaho's dropouts.

Strategy 7. Support Schools to Integrate Modern Electronic Technologies into Instruction. We held a full-day panel on the use of modern electronic technologies in Idaho education, exploring current practices and future possibilities. Despite its "pockets of excellence," our panel felt that Idaho has not taken advantage of the great potential of electronic technologies. Panelists pointed to the possibilities of "distance learning" — the one- or two-way transmission of video and other information between separate locations — for rural education. This use has only begun to be tapped in Idaho. And panelists further suggested that no school in the 21st Century could be considered equipped for the modern era unless these technologies were used by teachers and students as an integral part of learning.

Strategy 8. Establish Several Schools in Different Locations to be Partners with Universities for Improving Teacher Training. We propose that Idaho establish a small number of schools — at least two each at the elementary, middle, and high school levels — to be sites for a partnership with the state universities to strengthen teacher education. Some panelists in our Education Professions meeting felt that teacher education should undergo sweeping reform. This sentiment was echoed by many other people we interviewed. We felt that this issue was beyond the scope of our work, and chose to concentrate on practical strategies for improving the training of new teachers. Following the recommendation of a major national committee on teacher education, we propose the school/university partnership as a

realistic step that should have immediate consequences. The school sites would be places where prospective and new teachers could learn about modern approaches in a real setting. University faculty could help the schools implement innovations, and they too could learn the practical implementation issues that arise.

Implementing the Redesign of Curriculum and the Modernization of Teaching

The successful implementation of the strategies above would result in a different and more effective education system. However, the strategies should not be implemented piecemeal, for they must work together to produce a significant improvement in student performance. We propose the following integrated approach to implementation, an approach that allows for trial and evaluation before Idaho makes an irreversible commitment.

Schools of the Future

The 1991 Legislature should fund a new program, called "Idaho's Schools of the Future," that would start an era of innovation. The Schools of the Future would be pacesetters for all Idaho schools in revising their curriculum and modernizing their teaching to meet future student needs. The enabling legislation would provide initial funding and require the State Department of Education to plan for the program and begin issuing Requests for Proposals to school districts during the Fall of 1991.

The Schools of the Future program would provide significant new funds to schools selected competitively from around the state. Teachers in these schools would have time set aside to design and implement change, and they would share responsibility with the principal and parents for shaping their educational programs. These schools would be able to receive waivers from state regulations or collective bargaining agreements and, therefore, have the flexibility to become more effective and efficient. They would have to fulfill requirements to work in prescribed areas of reform, but otherwise the Schools of the Future would decide what to do and how to do it. After a period of three years, they would be held accountable for results.

Schools of the Future would thus be a demonstration program that would test the practicality and effectiveness of reform. The program would rely on local creativity to solve local problems. If the program were successful after a three to five year period, all Idaho schools would gradually become Schools of the Future by the year 2000.

This is how Schools of the Future could work:

Incentive Grants

i. Thirty-six schools, located around the state and evenly divided between elementary, middle/junior highs, and senior high schools, would each be awarded a grant of between $300 - $500 per student annually to develop their own ways to modernize curriculum, teaching, and school organization to meet statewide student performance goals.

Waivers from Regulations

ii. In addition to the extra resources, Schools of the Future would be eligible to receive waivers from specific regulations and collective bargaining agreements that might impede innovation. If it is demonstrated that waiving these regulations and agreements led to improved student performance, the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education would have the evidence they need to rescind and revise certain regulations for all schools.

Grants Based on Competition

iii. The Schools of the Future would be selected on a competitive basis. Each school would be eligible to submit a proposal for a one-year planning grant. A smaller number would be asked to submit full proposals for three-year implementation grants. The selected schools would be required to:

Shared Decision-Making

- involve teachers, students and parents in shared decision-making; this would shift responsibility so that the entire school community could decide on educational programs that are effective for its students;

Extended Contracts

- provide extended teacher contracts of one month devoted exclusively to planning and training;

Restructure Primary Grades

- restructure primary grades to provide education appropriate to children's development; each elementary School of the Future would receive additional funding sufficient to hire one child development specialist as an aide for each teacher in grades K through 2.

iv. These demonstration sites would be held accountable for meeting performance goals at the end of three to five years. If a school met its student performance goals, it would receive funding for an additional five years and then be reviewed again. The review would be conducted by the State Department of Education and would require the input of parents and community members. If a school fell short of its performance goals, its shared decision-making body would be required to submit an improvement plan to the State Department of Education, which could provide assistance, help set new performance goals, or cut off funding. If the Department approved the plan, the school would receive funding and assistance, but be publicly reviewed every two years until it met its student performance goals. This mechanism for a periodic public performance review would, in effect, be the pilot for an accountability procedure that eventually would be applied to all schools.

Accountability

v. Some Schools of the Future would be given incentives to demonstrate innovations that the state considers essential to achieving a higher level of excellence. We recommend that these special innovations be:

- three Technology Demonstration schools — an elementary, middle, and high school — which would receive additional support to use computer-based and telecommunications technology pervasively;

Technology Demonstration

- three senior high schools which would develop ways to provide student choice of academic and career options;

Student Choice

- three schools — an elementary, middle, and high school — which would be School/University Partnerships in which student teaching and university faculty training could occur.

School/University Partnerships

All Schools Can Become Schools of the Future

vi. If the program were successful, all schools would be phased-in as Schools of the Future within ten years. To become a School of the Future, each would write a proposal indicating its plans for meeting statewide goals. The school would become eligible to receive additional funding (at a lower level — $200 to $300 per student — than the original demonstration schools). They would have the flexibility to operate in a more deregulated environment. They would be subject, however, to the requirements listed above and, in particular, would be held accountable for results. The original demonstration schools would become field resource sites that educators, community members, and university personnel could visit.

* * *

This design for Schools of the Future comprehensively addresses almost all the major goals and strategies proposed by this report. It relies on the creativity of teachers and administrators in some of Idaho's best schools to implement innovations and solve the practical issues of fundamental restructuring. These professionals are the strength of Idaho education, and they are best able to pioneer the whole system's transformation.

BUILD A CAPABILITY FOR EXCELLENCE

The Goal

Schools throughout the state will have the capability to operate at a new plateau of effectiveness and efficiency.

The Strategies

1. **Strengthen the Teaching Profession by Increasing Salaries, Establishing School/University Partnerships to Assist in Teacher Education, and Recruiting Teachers for Shortage Areas.**

2. **Enhance Educational Leadership by Expanding Training and Professional Growth Opportunities for Principals, Superintendents, and Trustees; and by Strengthening the Department of Education's Role in Research and Development.**

3. **Bolster Rural Education by Investing in Regional Service Consortia and in Technology and Telecommunications.**

Discussion

Our earlier discussion of priority areas for improvement summarized the strong belief of most Idahoans who participated in this project: Idaho schools — and the K-12 education as a whole — currently lack the capability to accomplish many of the goals for significant progress so enthusiastically advanced by our panelists. Many of the necessary elements for reform are there: good ideas, good educators, and many committed community members and parents. Still, resources, a supporting infrastructure, and leadership — to set priorities, to mobilize for change, and to be accountable for results — need to be added in order to achieve reform.

Building a capability for excellence is a long-term issue that cannot be solved by one-time measures. Panelists identified three critical areas to pursue — the teaching profession, leadership at all levels of the education system, and rural education. Serious

concerns were also raised about the need to upgrade facilities, but this issue was beyond the scope of the Project.

Strategy 1. Strengthen the Teaching Profession. The overriding issue concerning the teaching profession in Idaho is whether the state can continue to attract and retain high quality teachers. The "graying" of the teaching force means that new teachers will have to be recruited at a greater rate than today, and recruiting will take place in a competitive labor market. As discussed earlier, teachers are paid less in Idaho than in most neighboring states. The salary differences were often cited by panelists as prime reasons why new teachers seek employment out of state and why more experienced teachers leave Idaho. Working conditions also are a prime reason that teachers decide to leave the profession; the strategies proposed in the preceding section would greatly enhance their working conditions because they would share in decision-making, have time devoted to professional development, and have the opportunity to innovate free of unnecessary regulations. The remaining issue concerns salary and teacher education.

Actions for Strategy 1

Salary Increases

i. We recommend that teacher salaries be raised each year until Idaho salaries are comparable to the average in the inter-mountain region. Two issues should be considered in implementing this recommendation. Teacher salary increases across the United States as well as in Idaho often do not keep pace with inflation. Whatever method the state uses to raise salaries, the increases should be thought of in "real" terms — that is, in increases that exceed inflation. Second, salary schedules vary greatly across districts in Idaho. The project considered a variety of ways to deal with this situation, including the possibility of Idaho adopting a modified form of a state salary schedule. However, there appears to be little agreement about these matters. The larger issue of inequity in spending across Idaho districts is currently being considered in the courts. We believe policies directed toward reducing variations among salary schedules should wait until the larger issue of school spending is resolved. The next section

discusses various options that Idaho can consider for the pace and amount of salary increases.

ii. Teacher education is important in maintaining a high quality teaching force. As suggested earlier, we have decided to focus on a critical aspect of this issue — the practical training of student teachers. A number of panelists felt that practical experience was crucial before a teacher had the responsibilities and pressures of his or her own class. We endorse this view. The preceding section accordingly proposed that six Schools of the Future work in partnership with universities to become places where new teachers can learn about teaching — in order to learn, first hand, about innovative practices to revise curriculum and modernize teaching.

Practical Training of Teachers

Strategy 2. Enhance Educational Leadership. The major change envisioned by this Project requires visionary and skilled leadership. Although there is an emerging group of outstanding administrators in Idaho, the unevenness of leadership was frequently cited by our respondents as a critical barrier to progress. Similar to the situation for teachers, a large portion of Idaho's administrators are aging, and the pay scale may be too low to attract an adequate supply of outstanding newcomers. Therefore, we recommend pay increases proportionately comparable to those suggested for teachers.

In addition to salary issues, the job of school and district administrators, as well as Trustees, has been changing. Matters, including negotiations, have become more complex and require higher skills. Unless training and opportunities for professional growth are made available, educational leadership will continue to lack the knowledge and skill needed to see the system through to a higher level of excellence. Moreover, once a higher level is attained, the need for strong leadership will be just as great, for change will have become inherent in education. The leadership role of the State Department of Education will also be essential, though different. There will be an increased need for Research and Development from a central source. As the system changes, the role of the Department should shift towards providing more

information, curriculum frameworks attuned to future student needs, and models of effective practices.

Actions for Strategy 2

Professional Development for ...

Principals

i. In addition to a rise in the salary level for administrators, we propose that the professional development opportunities for principals be expanded. Idaho's Project Leadership does an excellent job of providing a challenging professional experience for administrators. The state should build on this success by increasing the current subsidy so that Project Leadership can expand its operations and serve more principals on a regular basis.

Superintendents

ii. Although superintendents attend Project Leadership, a number of graduates of the program suggested that a separate program for district-level administrators could better serve their distinct needs. We propose that the state subsidize a new program for superintendents modeled after Project Leadership. However, this new program would be more intensive and comprehensive, though it would still be directed by superintendents' own interests. The subsidy should include an allowance for travel and related expenses so that superintendents from more remote rural districts could attend without excessive costs to the district.

Trustees

iii. Trustees can receive training from their own association, and be exposed at meetings to the problems and solutions of Trustees from other districts and states. Several knowledgeable Trustees suggested that there be a requirement for continued training to bolster current efforts. Furthermore, it was suggested that the State Department provide even more information than they currently can to help local boards select superintendents.

Strengthen State Department

iv. The capability of the State Department to play a more central Research and Development role depends on resources. We recommend that the State Department develop a long-range plan to shift its role away from regulation toward R & D. The plan would identify how the Department would redirect current staff activities to

support a performance-based system that relies on local innovation. In addition, the Department might require higher staff salaries as well as increases in the number of staff to carry out its new responsibilities.

Strategy 3. Bolster Rural Education. If implemented, many of our proposals would have a great impact on rural education, as well as on education in all schools. Yet there are special problems in rural areas that require special solutions. The solutions we recommend concern the building of human support and electronic infrastructure to combat the special rural problems arising from remoteness and sparsity of population.

Actions for Strategy 3

Technology

i. We recommend that Idaho **make a substantial and long-term investment in making modern technology and telecommunications available in rural areas as well as throughout the state.** One goal is for each teacher to have a telephone and have access to a teacher's work station equipped with a computer that can be linked with students' computers. In addition to a video player and a laser disk system for accessing information, the work station also would have the capability of receiving video or other information sent from other locations. The preceding section proposed that the Schools of the Future program, which would include rural schools, would be the vehicle for demonstrating this technology before it is spread to all schools.

Distance Learning

ii. Idaho presently uses "distance learning" — the transmission of video information between widely separated locations. Given its success in Idaho, we recommend that the state **subsidize the expansion of existing distance learning approaches, which primarily use satellite transmission.** However, a variety of technical approaches and suppliers are presently operating in Idaho. Thus, there is a danger of redundancy and conflicting equipment and procedures among the suppliers of distance learning. We

recommend that the state appoint a commission to better help manage expansion and set technical criteria to limit incompatibility among the different approaches.

Experimentation

iii. The state-of-the-art in telecommunications is rapidly approaching a time when it will be technically possible and economically feasible for teachers and students in one classroom to interact with peers in one or more other classrooms using video and audio transmissions. Experts estimate that the costs of this "live" interaction will be greatly reduced within five years, allowing widespread dissemination to rural areas. This extension of schooling beyond the limits of a physical building is appealing, but its benefits will depend on how well teachers can learn to adapt this technology to improving education. We recommend that Idaho **experiment with this interactive technology by funding a pilot project that would use a fiber optic network plus two-way receivers and transmitters to link a series of schools within a small region.** The pilot would be funded for five years and should help determine whether teachers can achieve significant improvements in student learning using this technology of the future. If so, Idaho can then consider a greater investment to spread its use across the state.

Regional Service Consortium

iv. The provision of technology will not help education unless teachers have support to learn how to use it effectively. This problem is particularly important for Idaho's rural schools because they have less support than in more populous areas. There is a lack of people and resources to train teachers on using technology — or, more generally, to help them revise the curriculum and modernize instruction. Thus, an investment in technology will not have its full payoff without a parallel investment in a human support "infrastructure" for rural areas. Idaho has an excellent model in the League of Schools, a consortium of districts that works with Idaho State University to

receive support services that a single district operating alone could not afford. The University subsidizes the League by providing space, some faculty time, and the use of a coordinator. Districts pay dues and receive services on a fee-for-service basis. District representatives direct the consortium and, therefore, decide on priorities. We recommend that Idaho **subsidize the dissemination of this model by funding, on a competitive basis, Regional Service Consortia.** The state would supply seed funds and matching operating funds, but the members of a Consortium would pay dues and a fee-for-service. Otherwise, the activities of the Regional Service Consortium would be up to its districts.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES

The preceding sections have outlined a series of sensible strategies, along with specific actions, designed to meet the goals for reform that emerged from our interviews and meetings across the state. Any one strategy, taken alone, is unlikely to produce a significant change in the performance of students. There is no single or simple panacea that can transform Idaho education. Hard decisions to implement feasible strategies over a sustained period is the most assured path to excellence. The Table on the following two pages summarizes our proposed strategies.

Although the strategies are listed separately, our action steps assume that implementation would occur in a coordinated way. For example, we propose that the Schools of the Future program could realize all the strategies to redesign curriculum and modernize instruction. Also, the strategies need to be phased-in, with some having a high priority for the first year. Thus, we recommend the following for the 1991 legislative session:

1. **An office to coordinate efforts in early childhood education and care should be established. (See the Goal of Enabling All Children to be Ready for School, Strategy 1.)**

2. **A Commission should be established to begin the process of setting goals for education and of developing new comprehensive examinations for students. (See the Goal of Shifting to a Performance-Based System, Strategies 1, 2, and 3.)**

3. **The Schools of the Future program should be started on a demonstration basis. (See the Goal of Redesigning Curriculum and Modernizing Instruction, all the strategies.)**

4. **Funding should be made available to strengthen the teaching profession by increasing salaries, to enhance leadership by subsidizing professional development for administrators, and bolstering rural education by starting the regional service consortia program and by funding telecommunications expansion. (See the Goal of Building A Capability for Excellence, some actions in all the strategies.)**

Proposed Strategies

ENABLE ALL CHILDREN TO BE READY FOR SCHOOL

1. **Establish an Office to Coordinate and Provide Oversight for the Mobilization of Efforts to Improve Public and Private Support for Early Childhood Care and Education.**
2. **Strengthen Existing Programs of Information and Comprehensive Care for Families of Infants.**
3. **Extend Head Start and Encourage Quality Care/Education for Children of Preschool Age.**
4. **Upgrade the Qualifications for Providers of Care/Education for Young Children and Expand Higher Education's Capacity to Provide Early Childhood Education Training.**

SHIFT TO A PERFORMANCE BASED SYSTEM

1. **Involve Educators, Business, and the Community in Setting Visionary Statewide Goals for Student Performance**
2. **Develop New Statewide Assessments of Student Performance and Institute A Comprehensive Examination System**
3. **Develop Broad Curriculum Frameworks for the Schools, but Pull Back from Restrictive Regulation.**
4. **Assist the Public to Hold Schools Accountable and Intervene in Chronically Failing Schools**

for Reform

REDESIGN CURRICULUM AND MODERNIZE INSTRUCTION

1. Provide Incentives for Schools to Redesign Their Curriculum and to Reorganize Instruction.
2. Enable Teachers to Have Non-Instructional Time for Learning New Curriculum and Teaching Approaches.
3. Establish Shared Decision-Making as the Norm in Idaho Schools.
4. Remove Regulations that Limit Innovation.
5. Restructure Early Grades to Provide Learning Appropriate to the Developmental Differences of Students.
6. Eliminate the Tracking of Students into Separate Educational Programs Based on Ability and Provide High School Students with Options for Different Career Paths.
7. Support Schools to Integrate Modern Electronic Technologies into Instruction.
8. Establish Several Schools in Different Locations to be Partners with Universities for Improving Teacher Training.

BUILD A CAPABILITY FOR EXCELLENCE

1. Strengthen the Teaching Profession by Increasing Salaries, Establishing School/University Partnerships to Assist in Teacher Education, and Recruiting Teachers for Shortage Areas.
2. Enhance Educational Leadership by Expanding Training and Professional Growth Opportunities for Principals, Superintendents, and Trustees; and by Strengthening the Department of Education's Role in Research and Development.
3. Bolster Rural Education by Investing in Regional Service Consortia and in Technology and Telecommunications.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Idaho has maintained a good public education system, despite spending considerably less than most other states. Idaho's expenditures per student places Idaho as 50th among the states. Its average of $3037 per student is well below both the national and the inter-mountain region average. Considering its student test scores and the high quality of its teaching force, Idaho has managed to obtain a great deal of value for its dollar. This economical approach to education should be continued, even as reforms are implemented. Spending more money for its own sake will not yield better education.

Expenditures per Student 1989-1990

State	Rank	Expenditure
Wyoming	14	$5,281
Oregon	17	$5,085
Washington	23	$4,638
Nevada	30	$4,387
Montana	34	$4,147
Idaho	50	$3,037
Utah	51	$2,733
National Average		$4,890

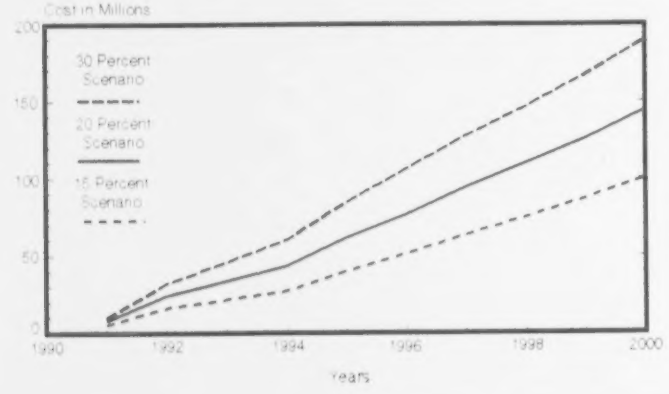
Nonetheless, reaching a new plateau will require a greater investment in education. We believe any additional funding proposals should be tied to those specific strategies that will enable the system to achieve at the higher level of excellence required for the future. This section discusses estimates of what it might cost to achieve the goals, strategies, and actions outlined in this report. Not all the strategies will cost additional funds; indeed, some efficiencies should be realized as unnecessary regulations are removed, performance goals are more clearly articulated, accountability becomes meaningful, current spending is redirected in more productive ways, and early childhood programs prevent unnecessary problems from arising in K-12 education. Though Idaho can be thus expected to wind up with a more efficient, as well as a more effective, education system, the improvements proposed here will require a higher level of expenditures to meet the future needs of Idaho's students.

The people of Idaho have choices to make as to how quickly they want to see the change in education occur and how confident they want to be that a new plateau of excellence is attained for all Idaho students. The budget allocated for reform depends on the

options selected. To provide a sense of the financial implications of these different choices, we have simulated several budget scenarios that vary in the pace or completeness of the improvement efforts. All the scenarios assume that all the strategies made in the last section will be adopted, and we trace out the budget implications of their implementation over ten years. The specific details of the scenarios are presented in the full report. Our estimates are necessarily rough approximations which do not, for example, take into account improved efficiencies from implementing the strategies or from the redirection of existing funding to pay for innovations. Though preliminary, these estimates should provide an accurate enough picture of the costs of our proposed strategies and some budgetary trade-offs that Idahoans may face.

The figure below shows an estimate of yearly costs for all the scenarios. The estimates are in constant 1990 dollars, which means that inflationary costs are not included. This is the same as assuming that Idaho expenditures for education (including state, local, and federal funds) will stay abreast of inflation and will be increased above inflation to pay for reform. We have also assumed that public school enrollment will increase slightly — by 5% — over the next ten years, and that Idaho will correspondingly increase its education budget to take into account enrollment increase; part of the cost shown in the figure is simply to pay for more students. However, our estimates do not include improvements in the system other than the ones proposed in this report; nor do they include additional expenditures for upgrading facilities — an issue Idahoans spoke to us about, but one which is beyond the scope of this work.

Estimates of Reform Costs



One scenario is the base case, in which we have priced the array of proposals assuming minimum additional expenditures and a steady, cautious phase-in. The funding level for the base scenario could be reduced if economic conditions do not permit increases, but at a great risk: doing reforms at too low a funding level may produce no improvement and end up wasting money. We view this scenario, therefore, as risky for reasons discussed shortly.

As with all the scenarios, spending for the base case begins gradually and builds up to a new level that would be maintained after the year 2000. The base case represents an average increase of about 1.5% per year in constant dollars over the ten year period. This is equivalent to a 15% rise in the level of expenditures per student for the new system of education. Idaho per student expenditures therefore might rise from its current level of $3037 to about $3500, which would still be far below what the national average might be in year 2001.

Table 1, which is on the following page, summarizes estimated costs for the main budget items for the base scenario for three years, with the last year representing the new plateau of spending that the system might maintain. The Schools of the Future Program is the most expensive cost item. The beginning years of this program are devoted to the demonstration phase for thirty-six schools, which would cost about $6 million per year. When all schools are phased-in, the cost would mount to about $50 million, with most of the funds intended for three areas — an extended teachers' contract to enable teachers to spend 10 concentrated days on planning, implementing change, and professional growth; innovation funds for schools to be used at their own discretion; and aids who are trained as child development specialists so that elementary schools can provide more appropriate education at the early ages.

Estimated Yearly Reform Costs of Base (15%) Scenario

Table 1
ESTIMATED YEARLY REFORM COSTS OF BASE (15%) SCENARIO
in constant $millions

	1991	1992	1993	2000
Enable All Children to Be Ready for School				
•Early childhood	.4	1.5	2.5	4.2
Shift to Performance Based System				
Goals & Tests	.1	.2	.2	.3
Redesign Curriculum and Modernize Instruction				
Schools of Future				
•Extended Contract	0	2.3	2.3	19.0
•Innovation Funds	.2	2.7	2.7	19.0
•Aides in K-2	0	.1	.2	10.2
•Technology	0	.2	.2	2.1
•School/university	0	.2	.2	.2
[Subtotal]	**[.2]**	**[5.5]**	**[5.6]**	**[50.6]**
Build Capability				
Salary Increase	3.8	7.7	11.7	42.4
Telecommunications	.8	.8	.8	.1
Regional Service Units	.1	.3	.6	1.8
Leadership	.2	.2	.2	.2
TOTAL	**5.6**	**16.2**	**21.6**	**99.6**

The next largest category of additional spending for the base scenario is an increase in the salary (and benefits) for teachers and administrators — amounting to about $42 million in year 2000. This increase represents a 10 % raise in salaries and benefits. (In addition, teachers would receive in this base scenario, another 5.5% increase for the extended contract. Please note again that these increases are in constant 1990 dollars. This recommendation about salary means that salaries for educators in Idaho would be adjusted to keep up with inflation, and that the increases proposed here are above inflation — otherwise it will be very difficult for Idaho to attract and retain quality educators.

The next largest estimated increase would be for an investment in helping poor children to be ready for school. The total, $4.2 million, is a modest amount compared to the need in Idaho and the great potential benefit. The main component of this money is an expansion of the Head Start program for children of poor families; the funds would allow an expansion so that only about 25% of

those currently eligible could be served. [Note: Early childhood funding is generally not included in K-12 education expenditure; we have included it here as a cost of educational reform because this investment will help prevent problems in schools and reduce the real cost of education.]

The remaining cost items are for building system capability. They too are minimal, and may be insufficient to realize the full promise of reforms. For example, in technology and telecommunications, the base scenario provides that only one in eight classrooms in the year 2000 will be equipped with modern computer-based technologies and telephones; we know, however, that high school graduates in the 21st Century will be entering a world where such technologies will be pervasive. The question, which can be applied to a number of key cost items in the base scenario is: will this minimal funding increase be adequate to support the need for schools to prepare students for the future?

The other two scenarios represent more assured approaches for Idaho's improvement of K-12 education. Whereas the base scenario represents about a 15% increase in ten years, the other scenarios represent approximately 20% and 30% increases to total educational expenditures at end of the same time period. These percentage increases correspond, respectively, to approximately $450, $600, and $900 additions to Idaho's current expenditures per student. The options for additional spending over the base case were not chosen arbitrarily; the higher budget scenarios reflect the assumption of more funds devoted to specific strategies that might raise the chances of yielding better returns for the investment. In other words, they may be more cost-effective when the benefits are weighed.

Specifically, the 20% and 30% scenarios increase the allocation of funds in ways indicated in Table 2, which is on the following page. For example, more funds are allocated to innovations under the Schools of the Future Program. These additional funds would increase the chances that schools will be able to adopt such important changes as year-round schooling, more faculty and aides in differentiated roles, incentives for performance, extended instructional days, and so on. These innovations need to be decided locally to fit local situations, but

the additional funding could spell the difference between success and failure of these efforts.

Estimated Cost of Three Scenarios in Year 2000

Table 2
ESTIMATED COSTS OF THREE SCENARIOS IN YEAR 2000
in constant $millions

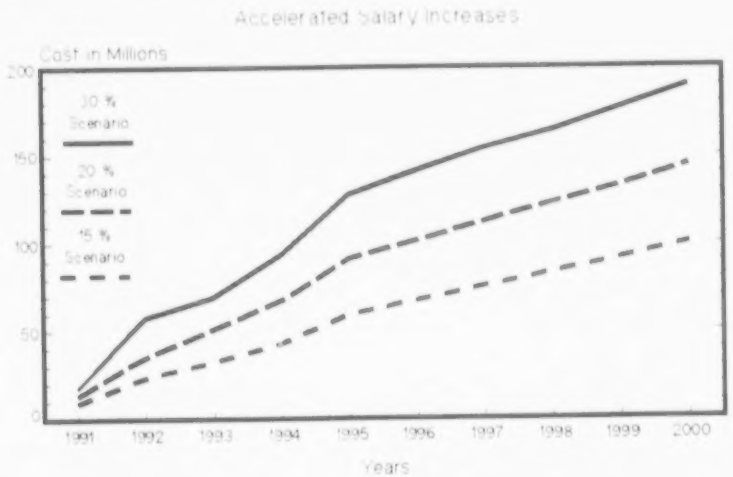
	Base (15%)	20% Scenario	30% Scenario
Enable all children to be ready for school			
•Early childhood	4.2	12.6	21.6
Shift to Performance Based System			
•Goals & Tests	.3	.3	.3
Redesign Curriculum and Modernize Instruction Schools of Future			
•Extended Contract	19.0	20.1	32.7
•Innovation Funds	19.1	26.9	23.3
•Aides in K-2	10.2	15.2	20.3
•Technology	2.1	2.8	4.1
•School/University	.2	.2	.2
[Sub Total]	**[50.6]**	**[65.2]**	**[80.6]**
Build Capability			
•Salary Increase	42.4	63.6	84.8
•Telecommunications	.1	.1	.1
•Regional Service Units	1.8	1.8	1.8
•Leadership	.2	.4	.5
TOTAL	**99.6**	**144.0**	**189.7**

Early childhood programs are also more heavily supported in the 20% and 30% percent scenarios. These scenarios would pay for the inclusion of more children in Head Start or related programs. The base scenario assumes that additional children would be placed in these programs so that Idaho would raise its support level from the current 16% of eligible poor children to 25%; the other scenarios assume approximately 50% and 75%, respectively, of eligible poor children would be served. In sum, the higher priced scenarios would give more poor children the opportunity to be better prepared to begin school. These levels of funding still fall short of the need, but they constitute a substantial increase over the base case and, in the long-term, could save the education system and society more than the investment itself.

These scenarios also invest more heavily in technology and telecommunications — for example, they include funding for computer work-stations and telephone connections for one out of six and one out of four teachers, respectively, compared to one out of eight for the base scenario.

Salaries are also increased more in these scenarios, going from a 10% increase in the base case to 15% and 20% increases, respectively. These higher raises would enable Idaho educators to be closer to the national and inter-mountain average and would increase the long-term competitive attractiveness of teaching and administration in Idaho. The key to quality education is quality educators with clear goals and flexibility to pursue them in a good learning environment. An investment in raising the salaries of teachers and administrators is, therefore, crucial to attaining a new plateau of educational excellence.

In light of the importance of attracting and retaining high quality professionals, we calculated another set of options using the previous scenarios but accelerating the rate at which educators' salaries would be increased. Rather than phasing in the salary increases over a ten-year period, the figure below shows the results of a five-year phase-in, beginning in 1991. This approach would bring salaries closer to the national average more quickly, and, therefore, would further help to strengthen the cornerstone of the reform effort — Idaho educators.



Estimated Reform Costs with Accelerated Salary Increases

In summary, none of these scenarios provide excessive funding, but they represent incremental spending that could be more cost-effective and could make the difference between long-term success and limited results. The choice among the scenarios, and any variations of them, ultimately rests with the people of Idaho and their sense of priorities for education.

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Paul Berman has been actively involved in educational research for the last 15 years. He has a Ph.D. in Political Science from M.I.T., has taught at Yale University, and has worked as a senior social scientist at the Rand Corporation. Working with educators, citizens, business and public officials, Dr. Berman has helped develop concrete plans for education reform in Minnesota, California, Hawaii and other states.

Driek Zirinsky, Managing Director of the Project, has spent her professional life in Idaho. From 1974-84 she was English/Language Arts Consultant for the Idaho State Department of Education; since then she has taught in the English Department at Boise State University, specializing in the teaching of English in grades K-12. She holds the B.A. from Oberlin College and the M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina. She has worked with Idaho teachers throughout the state, has served as President of the Idaho Council of Teachers of English, and is editor of INLAND, formerly the Idaho English Journal.

Phyllis Edmundson was born in Idaho Falls, attended elementary school in Shelley and Blackfoot, and graduated from high school in Emmett. She attended Boise Junior College, and later Boise College, to prepare for teaching in an elementary classroom. She earned master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Northern Colorado and has taught in the College of Education at Boise State University for 15 years. She has served as a trustee of the Boise School District, and is a frequent consultant on school improvement. During a sabbatical leave from Boise State, she was a senior researcher with John Goodlad's Study of the Education of Educators. Dr. Edmundson was a senior researcher with the Project until returning to Boise State University for the fall semester, 1990. Along with Dr. Zirinsky she helped conceptualize the project, conducted field visits throughout Idaho, and was the convener of several panels.

Barry Bull, a native of Montana, was both a VISTA volunteer and a teacher in Lewiston, Idaho and was certified as an English teacher by the University of Idaho. Later he worked for the Idaho State Department of Education as a planner and statistician. He has taught at the University of Hawaii and Minnesota, and is currently Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy and Administration at Indiana University.

Janice Fletcher has been involved in Idaho education for 11 years. She teaches and directs the Child Development Laboratory in the child development and family relations program at the University of Idaho. She worked for five years in special education at the University of Idaho where she helped teachers integrate children with disabilities into regular classrooms. Dr. Fletcher has taught at the University of Georgia, Auburn University, and at Appalachian State University in North Carolina. She has taught kindergarten, first, and second grades. She received her B.S. degree from Appalachian State University, her M.S. and Ed.D. from Auburn University.

Gary Lyman, a native of Idaho, is a graduate of Boise State University with a B.A. in political science and a master's degree in public affairs. He is currently the director of a non-profit research and educational organization designed to provide public and private decision makers with information on a wide variety of community quality of life issues. Mr. Lyman is the author of numerous studies on natural and human systems, including one on education K-12, for the project, he conducted interviews with employees in Idaho and worked on our analysis of future student needs.

Wayne Phillips was born and raised in Idaho's Panhandle. He has worked as a lumber jack, for the mines, and as a teacher. He was an elementary and secondary school principal and later worked for 20 years at the Idaho State Department of Education. Educated at the University of Idaho, he holds a B.S. in Business, the MA and Ph.D. in Education.

Richard L. (Dick) Sagness has lived in the state of Idaho for 11 years and was Dean of the College of Education at Idaho State University for 10 of those years. He has been actively involved in professional standards and practices and teacher development issues at the local, state and national levels, having served two terms on the Idaho Professional Standards & Practices Commission, and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Dr. Sagness has devoted a great deal of time and energy to the development of partnerships for school improvement, and has a particular interest in rural schools.

Bob Smith, a native of Idaho, holds a Ph.D. from the University of Idaho and is a former high school teacher. He currently is a Lecturer at the University of Idaho, where he teaches statistics and is doing research on educational finance issues in Idaho. Dr. Smith designed and executed the project's cost simulations for the proposed strategies.

Carolyn Thorsen has been active in Idaho education for 20 years. She has taught English, Spanish, accounting, typing, physical education and the learning disabled in Cambridge and Midvale, Idaho. Now she is the assistant director of the computer based instruction research laboratory at Boise State University, where she has also taught algebra, Spanish and computers in education. Her research interests include ICAI (intelligent computer assisted instruction,) and the use of technology to facilitate instruction in various academic subjects. Ms. Thorsen conducted the projects analysis of technology and convened a panel on this topic for the project.

Veronica Daley is a native of Boise, Idaho. After graduating from Boise State University with a B.A. in English, Secondary Education, Ms. Daley began teaching English at East Junior High. She is currently working on a Master's Degree in English.

Chris Gleason was born and raised in Boise, Idaho. She has taught 20 years in grades K-6 in Washington and Idaho schools. She was on sabbatical leave from the Boise Schools during 1990 to do research and attend classes in social studies/history. She holds a B.A. from Pacific Lutheran University and an MA in Curriculum and Instruction from Boise State University. Ms. Gleason teaches 5th grade at Hillcrest Elementary School in Boise.

Greg Martinez received his B.A. in Geology from Humboldt State University in Northern California. He has worked for USGS, BLM, and has done geological/archeological studies of Pueblo Indian cultures along the Rio Grande in Albuquerque, N.M. He completed his M.A. in Education from Boise State University in 1990. Mr. Martinez is working at B.S.U. for the Student Support Program, in addition to his work as a Reading and Study Skills instructor.

Donelle Ruwe was raised in Meridian, Idaho. As a member of the "Ruwe Family Band, TimbreLine," she performs bluegrass, gospel, and progressive Texas swing. Donelle teaches English at Fairmont Jr. High in Boise and has completed an M.A. in English at Boise State University. Ms. Ruwe is working in a doctoral program at the University of Notre Dame.

Betsy Williams is a 1989 graduate of Boise State University in Social Sciences and Public Affairs. She managed the office of The Idaho Education Project.

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